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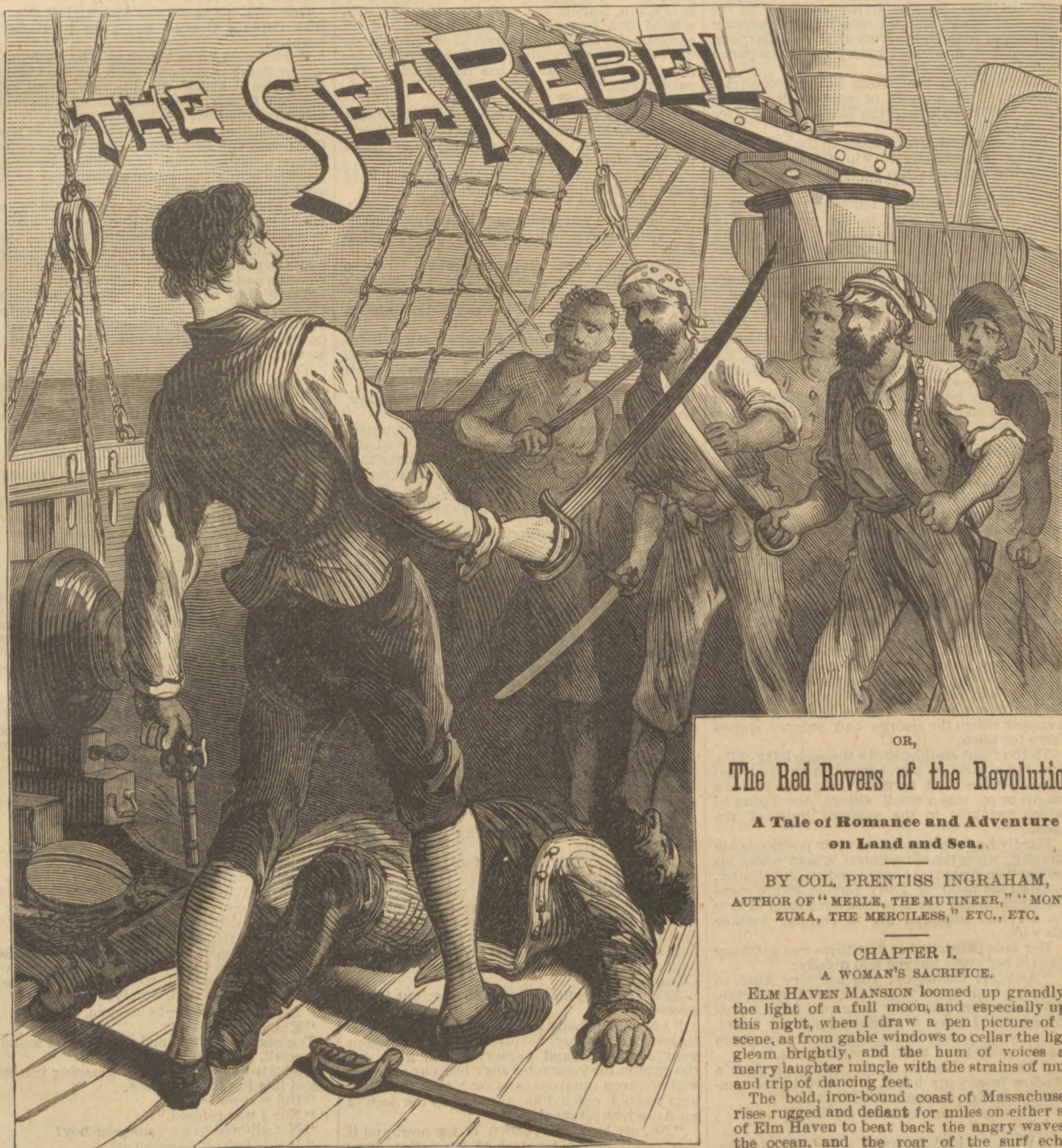
No. 593.

Published Every
Wednesday.

Beadle & Adams, Publishers,
98 WILLIAM STREET, N. Y., March 5, 1890.

Ten Cents a Copy.
\$5.00 a Year.

Vol. XLVI.



OR,
The Red Rovers of the Revolution.

**A Tale of Romance and Adventure
on Land and Sea.**

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM,
AUTHOR OF "MERLE, THE MUTINEER," "MONTE-
ZUMA, THE MERCILESS," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A WOMAN'S SACRIFICE.

ELM HAVEN MANSION loomed up grandly in the light of a full moon, and especially upon this night, when I draw a pen picture of the scene, as from gable windows to cellar the lights gleam brightly, and the hum of voices and merry laughter mingle with the strains of music and trip of dancing feet.

The bold, iron-bound coast of Massachusetts rises rugged and defiant for miles on either side of Elm Haven to beat back the angry waves of the ocean, and the roar of the surf echoes among the vales and against the cliff upon which the grand old home stands, for it yet re-

"AS I HAVE SLAIN BUCCANEER BALFOUR, SO I WILL SLAY ANY OF HIS CREW WHO LIFTS HIS HAND AGAINST ME." AND THE SEA REBEL STOOD GRANDLY AT BAY.

mains, a souvenir of an American home over a century ago.

The elms that shade the house, and the inlet, or haven, on the left, gave the place its name of Elm Haven, and the acres surrounding were numbered by the thousand, for there dwelt one of the oldest, richest and most aristocratic families in America, whose sole heiress had become the wife of an English baronet, Sir George Harwood, an officer of the army of Great Britain's king.

The wife had died, leaving two children, a son and a daughter, and where a shadow had fallen upon the youth, and he was an exile from his home, his name never mentioned beneath the Elm Haven roof, the daughter, Lady Lucille, had grown up to be beautiful among women, and loved by all who had ever known her.

The rumbling of war between the Colonies and the mother country had sent General Sir George Harwood to the field to fight for his king, and Lady Lucille, under the guardianship of her mother's brother, Judge Hazel, and his wife, was to remain at Elm Haven, which it was hoped would be safe from the ravages of soldiery, as a fort was near, and in the haven under the cliff a king's cruiser was to make its almost constant rendezvous.

But before going to the field, and upon the anniversary of his birthday, having lived fifty years, Sir George Harwood gave a grand entertainment in his luxurious home.

The king's cruiser Sea Foe had brought thither an old bachelor, an English admiral, as a guest, with his staff, and the officers from the fort had assembled also, with a few of the aristocratic Tory families living adjacent to the Harwood estate, and this was why the mansion glimmered with lights from attic to cellar, and the sound of music and merry voices resounded from the spacious halls.

Standing upon the piazza in the moonlight, surrounded by a score of young officers, was Lady Lucille, enjoying the balmy sea air after dancing.

She looked beautiful indeed in the moonlight, and her face was one to win a heart at sight, while her form was the perfection of grace and beauty.

Suddenly the officers fell back politely, as a man advanced, dressed in the uniform of a British admiral, and with his heart covered with decorations won by distinguished services rendered his king.

It was Lord Chester Chauncey, the king's representative at that time on the coast, and a man whose record was a gallant one, and of whom men stood in awe.

His hair was iron-gray, his face clean-shaven, and though handsome, he yet had passed the half a century milestone of life, in fact, was nearing three-score years.

"As I do not dance, fair Lady Lucille, you were so good as to say you would give me a promenade."

"May I claim the honor now?"

The voice was deep and sonorous, and not unpleasant, and the manner courtly, and Lady Lucille answered as though it gave her pleasure to accept the proffered arm.

"Yes, my lord, I will gladly give you a promenade—shall it be upon the cliff?"

The admiral seemed delighted, while the dozen young officers looked angry, yet swore at their misfortune in losing the society of the young girl.

So away walked the admiral and Lady Lucille across the plateau lawn, until they halted upon the cliff, near a rustic arbor.

The sea dashed fiercely against the rocky cliff several feet below, and upon the left was the haven, in which lay at anchor the king's cruiser, the schooner Sea Foe, with all quiet on board, for the crew were in the pines ashore enjoying a supper which Sir George had ordered spread there for them.

To the right an inlet broke through lofty cliffs, forming a basin, a bay beyond, with bold and rugged shores, and further along the shores a league or so, was a small village, the lights of which twinkled in the subdued light of the moon.

Hardly had the two taken their position upon the cliff, when the old admiral, a man whom his fellow-men feared as a stern and resolute leader, grasped the hand of Lady Lucille, and in earnest, impassioned words poured out a story of love for her, and implored her to one day become his wife.

Her face paled, and at first there was a strange light in her eyes; but she said quietly:

"Admiral Chauncey, you are very kind to deem me worthy of your love, and I appreciate the honor; but just now let us not talk of such things, for I have a shadow upon my heart, which your hand can raise, and until its gloom passes away I can think of nothing else."

"Ah, Lady Lucille, if my hand can dash a shadow from your heart, you have but to command me to do so and it shall be done."

"I am not so sure of that, my lord."

"Try me."

"Well, my lord, I would speak to you in behalf of one who now lies on yonder cruiser in double irons, chained to the deck and to die

within two weeks at the yard-arm for having been found guilty of being a rebel spy."

"Hail you refer to Cecil Conrad, the disgraced king's officer?" almost angrily said the admiral.

"I refer, my lord, to Cecil Conrad, an American sailor who was born up where that light shines in his home at the head of Refuge Inlet, and where his poor old widowed mother now sorrows for her condemned boy."

"A sailor from boyhood, he supported his mother, and one day, for you were here, admiral, when a storm capsized the little yacht in which I and two officers were sailing, you saw him, Cecil Conrad, spring from this very cliff into the sea and save my life and that of the captain of the Sea Foe there, though he had a broken arm, while poor Captain Moore of the fort was lost."

"You saw him refuse succor from the life-boat that came to our aid, when he knew that delay to pick him up would cost all their lives, and unaided reach the shore."

"Did I not make him a king's lieutenant upon the Sea Foe, Lady Lucille, and how did he repay me?"

"He saved the cruiser afterward, with all on board; one night in a storm, when my father and myself were also on the vessel, as you know, and—"

"And when at home on leave he piloted a pirate craft into the inlet here one night, and out to sea again, while here signed his commission as a king's officer, intending to serve the rebels, in fact was a rebel, and entered his majesty's service simply as a spy."

"Those were you charges against him, my lord, and with the jury of officers you appointed to try him, fearing you, and knowing that you wished him found guilty, they found a verdict accordingly, and he is doomed to die; but I do not believe he was guilty, and I never will so believe, and for what he has done I ask you to pardon him."

"I pardon him?"

"Yes, my lord, for you said only to-night that new dispatches from the king gave you discretionary powers that would permit you to act as the king himself might do."

"You have the power, my lord, so I ask it of you to pardon this young American."

"This rebel?"

"Yes, if so you prefer to call him, my lord."

"Your interest is deep in this rebel, Lady Lucille?"

"And why should it not be when I owe to him my life, twice saved, and my father's life."

"What would your father say to this interest in a low-born American?"

"My father, for some strange reason, hates Mr. Conrad, and I cannot understand his wish to see him gotten rid of, when he owes so much to him."

"Your interest is akin to love, I should say, Lady Lucille."

"My lord, say rather that it is akin to humanity, to gratitude, for do you not know what I owe him? And Lord Chauncey, remember that he is, as you say, a fisher-lad, a poor coast sailor, while I am Lady Lucille Harwood."

"Forgive me, Lady Lucille, but for the moment I was jealous."

"And you will pardon this poor man and let him go his way in peace?"

"To join the rebel ranks against us, to wave his rebel flag in our faces upon the sea?"

"If so he will, yes, my lord. Surely you do not fear one American sailor."

"I have no fear, Lady Lucille, of the whole rebel navy," was the sharp retort, and then the admiral continued:

"You ask that, Lady Lucille, which I would not grant for a fortune, nor the asking of every officer in the king's service, your father included, and if I do grant your request it must be upon conditions."

"You mean to purchase your consent?"

"Exactly."

"Name your price, my Lord Chauncey?"

He hesitated an instant, and his face flushed as with shame; but he said firmly:

"Your hand, Lady Lucille."

She started, half turned away, and then faced him boldly.

Looking squarely into his face she said in a voice that did not quiver:

"You ask my hand in marriage, Lord Chauncey, in payment for your pardon of Cecil Conrad, rebel sailor, now under sentence of death at the yard-arm and I agree to your price; but, remember, my heart does not go with my hand. Do you accept my conditions, Admiral Chauncey?"

Again his face flushed with shame; but he answered:

"I love you, Lady Lucille, and will teach you to love me by my devotion to you. I accept your conditions, and to-morrow will give you the pardon for your rebel spy; but our compact will not keep me from hanging him at the yard-arm when I catch him at sea upon the deck of an American pirate ship."

"No, my lord, the pardon is for now, and if you catch him afterward at sea, why, hang him!" and then she added:

"Let us return, now, my lord, for I have lost

two dances, and I only promised you one, you remember."

He offered his arm, and as they reached the piazza, a handsome young officer in the uniform of a colonel of dragoons came up and claimed her for a dance.

"What did my lord say?" he asked in a whisper.

"I won the game, but the stakes played for were high," was the bitter reply, and the beautiful eyes were filled with tears.

CHAPTER II.

UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE YARD-ARM.

BACK from Elm Haven Manor a league, and up at the head of the little inland bay known as Refuge Inlet, stood at the time of which I write a large stone homestead known as The Refuge.

So at least its master in the olden time had named it, and its broad acres had then rivaled in number the estate of Elm Haven.

But it had gone almost to ruin, for only one wing of the vast stone building was occupied at the time this story opens.

A score and more of rooms in the main building, and in another wing were closed, and stripped of their furniture, and decay was resting upon all.

The heiress to The Refuge had also, like the heiress of Elm Haven, married an Englishman, but one who was a sailor.

What her life with him had been no one seemed to know; but he had been a man of mystery from the first, and while his beautiful wife remained at the old home with her little son and two old Africans, he, Captain Carl Conrad, had sailed the seas in his own vessel.

One night his vessel was lost, and it was said that Captain Conrad had gone to his last account.

But all went on as before at The Refuge, the widow living in seclusion with her son Cecil and the Africans, Congo and his wife Kaloo, whom Captain Conrad had taken from a slave-ship, and thus won their life-long devotion.

An educated woman, Mrs. Conrad had taught Cecil well, and then, too, he had been a sailor in coasters, until he came to command his own little sloop which brought in a small income from voyages now and then.

A splendid, whole-souled youth, handsome as an Adonis, formed like a Hercules and knowing nothing of fear, he had become noted as a most skillful and daring coast-pilot, a perfect seaman, while so many lives had he saved that he had won the name of the Boy Life Saver.

There were ugly rumors afloat that Captain Conrad had been a smuggler, perhaps a pirate, and that the widow's household was kept up upon treasures which the old sailor had hidden away.

Then, too, there were those who asserted that for his evil deeds in life the spirit of Carl Conrad had been forced to haunt the earth, and scores of men, yes, and women, too, from the village a league from the old stone mansion, who vowed to having seen Carl Conrad's ghost roaming the woods about his house, sailing upon the inlet, or the sea, and few cared to go in the vicinity by day or night.

And, it was Carl Conrad's son, the "Life-Saver," who then lay below decks on the coast cruiser Sea Foe, in double irons and under the shadow of the yard-arm.

His splendid services were of no avail, when it was hinted that he had accepted a king's commission simply to aid him in his service as a rebel spy.

Young, for he was not twenty-four, handsome, courtly and brave, he had been dragged under the shadow of the hangman's rope, and, with the Colonists taking up arms against the king, he must be made an example of.

While Lady Lucille was pleading with Admiral Chauncey upon the cliff, for the life of the brave young American sailor, who had saved her life, and the lives of many more, a woman paced to and fro in a large, comfortable room on the lower floor of the old house known as The Refuge.

She hardly looked her age of two-score years, for her face was yet strikingly lovely, and her form faultless.

Dressed in deep black, she walked up and down with the nervous tread of one in distress, though outwardly she was calm.

Now and then she would go to the window and glance out upon the scene, lighted up by the full moon, and her gaze would sweep down the inlet toward the sea.

Suddenly she started and came to a standstill, as a step was heard in the hall, and the next moment a negress of wild, weird look peered into the door and said, simply:

"All right, missus—he come in."

"Yes."

The negress retired, and without the sound of a footfall, a man entered.

He glided toward her, and grasping her hand, asked in a low, earnest tone:

"Did you see him?"

"No; I was refused."

"Not allowed to see your poor boy?"

"Is this British humanity?"

"Yes, I was refused, though I urged that I had no means of rescuing him, and it was only a

mother's heart that longed to bid farewell to a noble son who was soon to die upon the yard-arm, though guiltless of any crime."

"Yes, guiltless of any crime, you say truly," the man repeated slowly after her, and then quickly said, and with stern resolution in his voice and manner:

"Then I must act."

"Alas! it is impossible, utterly so, for he is chained to the deck, with manacles upon his feet and ankles."

"In his state-room?"

"Yes."

"A guard outside?"

"Yes, a marine with loaded musket."

"Starboard or port?"

"Starboard, the second from the main cabin, for I asked a sailor all I dared."

"And the men?"

"Pity and respect him, believing his sentence unjust."

"He has friends among the British officers?"

"Yes, Major Paul Pearley, who commands the fort, and Colonel Lord Neil Norcross, who is chief of General Sir George Harwood's staff."

"But no one on the cruiser?"

"Not one."

"And Lady Lucille?"

"Is his friend, yet what can she do?"

"Much; a woman can do much; but I will seek no aid, but save him myself."

"Alas! you cannot, and beware for your own safety. Ah, beware!" and the woman laid her hands earnestly upon the man's arm.

He smiled, almost with defiance it seemed, and said firmly:

"I give you my pledge—he shall not die at the yard-arm, for this night will I rescue him against every danger that may bar my way."

"Await up, for he will come to you ere dawn, mark my words."

The woman sunk into a chair, almost overcome with hope and joy, and she tried to speak, to detain the man; but he quickly passed from the room and the house.

When at last she was able to move she sprung to her feet and rushed to the window.

There out upon the moonlit waters she beheld a white surf-skiff under sail, and at the tiller a form clad in white.

It was a spectral sight, and well might one in that superstitious age upon beholding it believe that he looked upon Carl Conrad's ghost.

"He has gone, and I have his pledge to save him."

"Heaven help them both!" and the woman sunk upon her knees by the window, and her eyes became riveted upon the little skiff as it sped away like a phantom over the waters.

CHAPTER III.

THE REBEL SPY.

THE king's cruiser Sea Foe was a perfect model of a small vessel-of-war.

She was schooner-rigged, with a tremendous yard for a square-sail forward, as sails of such kind were often used a century ago.

Her masts were very tall, tapered gracefully and raked aft to a striking degree, enabling her to carry a tremendous spread of canvas, there being a greater distance than was usual between her masts, while her bowsprit and main-boom were remarkably long.

A vessel of over three hundred and fifty tons, she was possessed of a generous beam, and had the appearance of being both a very stanch and fleet craft, while her battery was a fine one and her crew an even hundred of gallant British tars.

The duties of the Sea Foe were in being a dispatch-boat, and a coast guard, her cruises extending from the Kennebec River as far south as Sandy Hook, while her usual rendezvous was in the harbor that gave to the home of Sir George Harwood its name of Elm Haven.

The captain of the Sea Foe was Godfrey Burnett, a gallant English sailor, whose life had been saved, as has been said, by Cecil Conrad when he was out sailing in a small yacht with Lady Lucille Harwood and Captain Moore, the latter being lost.

With an arm broken when the yacht went over, Captain Burnett had become the guest of Sir George, and Lieutenant Jules Girard had taken command of the Sea Foe, while Admiral Chauncey, who had witnessed the gallant rescue by Cecil Conrad, had made the daring young American a king's officer.

What had followed in the next three months has been already told, and the reader is now taken on board the Sea Foe upon that beautiful moonlight night when standing on the cliff Lady Lucille Harwood pleaded so earnestly with Lord Chauncey for the life of the young sailor, and failing to gain her point without a sacrifice, had submitted to the price demanded by the admiral, the giving to him of her hand in marriage.

In a small officer's state-room of the Sea Foe sat the prisoner, his face resting in his manacled hands.

The small port was open, and through it came a balmy breeze, while the sound of music and merry voices ashore reached his ears.

He was dressed in the garb of a common sailor, but it showed his splendid form to perfec-

tion, as he suddenly stood upright and the light of the battle lantern in the gangway fell full upon him, for the door was open.

Upon the decks not a sound was heard, for only a midshipman and a couple of seamen were on watch, for all the crew had been allowed to go ashore where a feast had been spread for them by the order of Sir George, while the officers to a man, had gone up to the mansion to join in the revelry there.

It was an extra occasion, with war to follow for the gallant tars, and so the stern discipline of the ship had been relaxed for the once.

"My God! must I really hang like a man who has been guilty of some great crime?" broke from the prisoner's lips.

"Hung to the yard-arm, and fill a felon's grave in the memory of those who love me?"

"I do not fear death, for I have risked it a hundred times to save the lives of others; but I do shrink from such a death, such a one as a pirate is doomed to."

"I have friends, but they are powerless to save me, great as they are, for Lord Nevil and Major Pearley have done all in their power, and she, the beautiful Lady Lucille, I know has made a brave fight for my pardon."

"But no, it is determined by those in power that I die, as a lesson to my compatriots, the gallant rebels, as they call American soldiers striving to cast off a king's yoke."

"Alas! that I am not a patriot soldier, or sailor, in the American service, to die as such for my country; but no, they trapped me ere I could draw my sword for my country, and who will regret my death but a very few—Ha! see there!"

As he spoke he glanced out of the port-hole, and his eyes had fallen upon a white surf-skiff, with snowy sail, gliding by within a length of the cruiser.

At the tiller was a man standing upright, tall, clad in white, and with long, flowing gray hair and beard.

More he could not see, for as silently as a specter the mysterious little craft glided by.

"No hail comes from the deck—Ha! there was a fall like a man's form."

"I know that nearly all are ashore, but it cannot be that even he would dare this bold game for my rescue."

"By Heaven, but he has dared it?" and, as the sailor in irons glanced from his state-room door, he saw approaching him in the dim light between decks, a white-robed form in seaman's garb that, with its long, white hair and beard, looked like Old Neptune, or—*or Ghost of the Sea!*

On came the white form, seeming to glide, rather than walk, for his feet gave back no sound, and his eyes fell upon the sailor leaning from the state-room door.

Another moment and he was by the prisoner's side, and his voice was deep and earnest as he uttered the words:

"It is not for you, Cecil Conrad, to die at the yard-arm of a king's ship—your destiny lies before you on the high seas."

Words broke from the lips of the sailor, but so lowly uttered as to reach no ear it seemed, and the white-haired rescuer quickly bent himself to the task before him.

Grasping the manacled wrists he freed them with a key taken from a bunch hanging to his belt, and the irons upon his ankles were alike unlocked, and then re clasped.

Then the rescuer said simply:

"Come!"

Without a word the young sailor obeyed, up to the deck, where the midshipman was seen in a swoon, having come face to face with what he believed to be Carl Conrad's ghost, and a seaman crouched in terror by the bulwarks.

Over the gangway went rescuer and rescued, into the little skiff alongside, and then came the order:

"Lie down and draw this over you."

He obeyed, drawing over him a white sheet.

And away from the cruiser glided the little craft out toward the sea, through the surf and along the coast of towering rocks, to dash swiftly through the breakers into the perilous channel leading into Refuge Inlet.

Swiftly over the moonlit waters the boat sped along toward the further end of the inlet, and there ran into a land-locked harborage under the shadow of the old crumbling stone mansion, the home of Mrs. Conrad and her son.

"Go quickly, for your mother awaits you," said the white-haired helmsman as the young sailor sprung ashore.

"And you, sir?"

"I have work to do now, but will see you at a later hour—back! do you not hear the long-roll of alarm sounding at the fort?"

"Yes, my escape is discovered, and—"

"You are safe," and the old sailor pushed his skiff away, while the young man hastened on to the mansion.

Still kneeling at the window his mother saw him as he came toward the house and with a glad cry sprung to her feet and met him at the door as his foot touched the threshold.

"Mother, I am a free man once more, and I was rescued by—"

"Sh—! I know all, my son," was the low re-

ply of the now happy woman as she drew her rescued son within the door of his old home.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MYSTERY DEEPENS.

IT was a strange story that the midshipman and the men on watch on board the Sea Foe told, of how Carl Conrad's ghost had sailed in from the sea in his specter skiff, and boarding the vessel-of-war, had gone below; but it was true, and the unconscious middy and men, scared half out of their wits, seemed proof of the visit of a being from the other world.

The prisoner was gone, that was a fact, and his manacles were there, still locked, and yet he could never have slipped them over his hands and feet except through supernatural aid, and the key to the irons was in the pocket of Commander Jules Girard, who was enjoying the evening up at the mansion.

The captain swore "if he had been in command the prisoner would never have escaped," and one of his brother officers nearly got a duel on his hands by hinting that, if Captain Burnett had not been in love with Lady Lucille, his broken arm would not have kept him three months away from his ship.

The admiral stormed and swore, for he knew that it was no pledge any longer on the part of Lady Lucille to become his wife, as the prisoner had set himself free, and Lord Chauncey was just then very much in need of a fortune, and that was just half his desire in wishing to marry the heiress of Elm Haven.

As for Sir George Harwood, he turned livid with rage when he heard of the escape of the man who had saved the life of his daughter on two separate occasions, and his own life once.

The idea of a "ghost" rescuing the prisoner was laughed at by some, yet superstition held too full sway in those times to utterly deny the truth of it, at least in the minds of the majority.

When it was known positively that Cecil Conrad, the rebel spy, was no longer on the cruiser, but actually gone, the crew were called on board, and the Sea Foe put out to sea in search of his spectral rescuer, and Captain Buraett went in command of his vessel, as though determined to put a feather in his cap by the capture of the fugitive.

The soldiers in the fort were also at once dispatched to search the shore, and inland, and a special party was ordered to go to The Refuge and invade its recesses in an endeavor to find the prisoner.

A larger force of cavalry was sent into the village to see if Cecil Conrad had found refuge there, and so it was that the excitement became intense, and the gentry who were at the Hall at Elm Haven ordered their carriages and horses and went to their homes.

This left at the mansion the angry old admiral, Sir George, and a couple of officers, Major Pearley of the fort, and Lord Nevil Norcross, of the staff of General Harwood.

Judge Hazel and his wife were also there, and Lady Lucille, coolest of them all, had taken up a book and pretended to be reading.

Thus an hour passed and then a servant entered, and reported the Sea Foe putting back into the haven.

Half an hour more, and Captain Burnett himself entered.

"Well, Burnett, what news have you?" said the admiral, quickly.

"I came upon a coast fisherman, sir, off-shore, and hailing from the village above, and he reported seeing, while at anchor, fishing, Cecil Conrad's ghost—"

"What, sir?"

"I mean, my lord, he reported seeing a white skiff, with a white-robed form at the tiller, stand out of The Refuge Inlet, keep along shore, and run into the haven."

"Well, sir?"

"Half an hour after, sir, he says the ghost—the white skiff I mean, my lord—came out of the haven and returned into the inlet once more."

"And the prisoner?"

"He reported the helmsman as being alone in the boat, my lord, upon its return."

"Nonsense! that pretended specter rescued him and no one else, and if I believed that the men on board your vessel were in league with him, I would string them up to the yard-arm at sunrise."

"But why did you return, sir?"

"To land a force, sir, for my men are now coming ashore and securing boats to search every foot of the inlet and the rebel's home."

"Pardon me, Captain Burnett, but my men are now engaged in that work, and I have given a competent officer orders to search the Conrad homestead," said Major Pearley.

"My crew can certainly aid your men, Major Pearley."

"There is no need of it, sir, for my men will do their work ashore, and you will need yours afloat, for the prisoner did not escape from the fort, you know."

This was a cut at the naval officer, and he felt it, for his face flushed and he glanced hastily at Lady Lucille to see if she had noticed it; but she seemed wholly interested in her book.

"May I not, my lord, have my crew search the inlet and that old rookery, for the prisoner has certainly gone into hiding in his home."

"Well, Pearley, as I am most anxious to capture the man, for special reasons of my own," and the admiral glanced at Lady Lucille, who, if she understood the allusion showed no sign of doing so. "I wish that Burnett and his crew might go and make the search more thorough."

"Pardon me, Admiral Chauncey, but as you seem to doubt the ability of the officer I placed in command of the searching squad, I will go myself, so there can be no mistake."

The words of the dashing young hussar were too pointed to admit of a misunderstanding, and so the admiral said:

"All right, Pearley, if you go yourself there will be no need of Burnett and his men."

"None, sir."

"And I will accompany you, Pearley," said Lord Nevil Norcross rising.

"With pleasure, Colonel Norcross," was the quick reply, and Captain Burnett bit his lips as he felt the same courtesy had not been extended to him.

"You will not have time to return to-night, Major Pearley, so you and Norcross breakfast with us at nine and tell us the result of your search," said Sir George.

With a bow of acceptance the two officers left the room, and Admiral Chauncey quickly got rid of the captain of the Sea Fox with the remark:

"Return on board your vessel, Burnett, with the men you ordered ashore, and see that an officer is on watch that does not swoon away at the sight of a ghost."

As Captain Burnett had already assumed command, though temporarily he had intended it, this settled it with him in regard to longer continuing his visit at Elm Haven, and he inwardly cursed the admiral for his interference.

But there was nothing left for him to do but obey, and so he made his adieux to Sir George and Lady Lucille with many expressions of gratitude at the kindness shown him, and saying that he would send for his traps in the morning he took his departure gritting his teeth with rage and disappointment.

Hardly had he departed when Judge Hazel and his wife retired, and an orderly calling Sir George from the room, Lady Lucille and Admiral Chauncey were left alone.

"This is a remarkable affair, Lady Lucille, remarkable," he said almost angrily.

"The ghost, my lord?"

The admiral muttered something that sounded very like:

"D—the ghost!"

But aloud he said:

"I mean the escape of the man upon whom all my hopes of happiness depended."

"You were good enough to say to me earlier in the evening, my lord, that your hopes of happiness depended upon me."

"You are a wicked tease, Lady Lucille, for you remember your pledge?"

"Yes, to become your wife if you gave Cecil Conrad his freedom?"

"Yes, Lady Lucille."

"But he has set himself free."

"And would you therefore say, Lady Lucille, that your pledge to me is broken?"

"Assuredly, my lord."

"And can I no longer hope?" anxiously asked the admiral.

"Yes, capture Conrad and then pardon him on the same terms as before; but catch him before you pardon him, my lord," and with a pleasant good-night, Lady Lucille left the room just as Sir George returned to enjoy a chat alone with Lord Chauncey over the mysterious occurrences of the night.

CHAPTER V.

THE HAUNTED CORRIDOR.

"You had some motive, Pearley, in wishing to keep Burnett from going on the search after Conrad?" said Lord Nevil Norcross, as the two officers mounted their horses and rode away from the Harwood Mansion.

"Well, yes."

"May I ask what it was?"

"Certainly, for we are pledged in this matter both of us, to aid Lady Lucille, as you know."

"Yes, as far as we consistently can do so, without compromising our own honor as British officers."

"Very true, and from a warm desire to also serve that splendid young rebel, if rebel he is, Cecil Conrad, for your views are mine, Norcross, as regards the man."

"Certainly, for he is a fine fellow, deserving of our friendship though a foe."

"I owe him my life, as you know, and a braver fellow does not live, while I feel sure that he is not guilty of having been a spy, and accepting an officer's commission under the king to ferret out information for the Colonists."

"He is a rebel at heart, I know, and resigned when war became a certainty; but he is no spy, and I for one am glad of his escape; but how in the names of all the saints did he get away?"

"That is a secret, and I believe only Lady Lucille can solve it."

"You believe she arranged it?"

"I half think so, for she was determined he should not be hanged."

"True, but one of my young officers went to sleep in the arbor on the cliff to-night, and told me he was awakened by voices, and was afraid to move when he saw who the speakers were and overheard what was said, and it was no more than a pledge on the part of Lady Lucille to marry old Chauncey if he would set Conrad free."

"The devil!"

"Yes, so say I, for he is an old devil to exact such a pledge to do a just action."

"But if Lady Lucille did this she can hardly have arranged the escape."

"So it seems, and must be; but if she did do so, then, it strikes me, she must care more for this young rebel Norcross, than for either you or I."

"You are correct in that; but my eavesdropper asserts that she said she would give her hand to the admiral, but her heart did not go with it."

"By the king's crown then she is in love."

"Sure."

"Did the old salt accept her on those terms?"

"He just snapped at the bait only too quickly."

"But who is it she loves?"

"Don't ask me, Pearley, only I am pretty sure it is not your humble servant."

"Nor I."

"Nor Burnett."

"I guess not; but we have been rivals, open and above-board in our love for the fair Lucille, and yet neither may win, and after all her heart may be in the keeping of—?"

"Whom?"

"The Rebel Spy!"

"Great Heavens!"

Then a silence fell between these two friendly rivals, which was at last broken by Major Paul Pearley who said:

"I did not wish Burnett and his crew to go to Conrad's home for fear they might find him there, and the officer I sent I ordered not to be rude or too intrusive."

"Now, as I headed Burnett off, we must go, and I'll get my own escort as we reach the fort, and I do not think they will find him."

"I hope not; but what do you think of this ghost story, Pearley?"

"All a plot, Lord Nevil, though I confess I cannot solve the mystery; but here we are at the fort."

Without dismounting, Major Pearley ordered a score of men to follow with lanterns, and the two officers rode on toward the old homestead where dwelt the Conrads.

They met the young officer and his squad, sent to search the house, returning, and he reported that the prisoner could not be found.

"We will make another search, Calder," said Major Pearley, and arriving at the mansion they found all dark there.

A hail brought a query from a window as to what was wanted, and the answer was:

"Pardon me, Madam Conrad, but I am Major Pearley, and I have come to search your home for Cecil Conrad, who mysteriously escaped from the king's cruiser, Sea Fox, to-night."

"You are welcome to make the search, sir, though an officer and men have just done so pretty thoroughly."

"May I ask if you knew of your son's escape?"

"I heard it, sir, from Lieutenant Calder."

"And not before, madam?"

"Do you think my son would come to hide in the place which, first of all, would be searched for him?"

"She evades my questions, Norcross, so she is in the secret," whispered Major Pearley, and aloud he remarked:

"Well, we must search the old place, to keep the admiral from having it pulled down, for he would give much to catch Conrad, if only to set him free and win the fair Lucille."

"You are right," was the answer, and the two officers dismounted and entered the mansion, followed by a dozen soldiers, several of whom carried lanterns.

Mrs. Conrad, fully dressed and perfectly calm, met them at the door and bade them go at will through the mansion, adding:

"There is one wing the lieutenant did not enter, for his men thought that they beheld my husband's ghost there and did not dare make the search; but you will of course leave no part of my wretched old home unsearched."

"Such is my intention, madam," was the reply, and the search began at once, the men, however, from the remark of the widow, going about it with a very certain sign of dread.

Perhaps the men did not notice it, but Congo did, and so reported it to his mistress, that the two officers did not appear to be very thorough searchers.

The African followed the party closely, and at last pointed out what was known as the "Haunted Wing" of the old rookery.

As they turned into a long corridor, a lantern was flashed ahead, and Congo uttered a yell that

fairly froze the blood of the searching soldiers, and a moment after set them all in rapid flight except the two officers.

One of these seized a lantern a sergeant had thrown away, and held it over his head, while he said:

"It is gone; but did you see it, Norcross?"

"Distinctly, Pearley, for it descended those steps, and came directly toward us, and with no sound of footfalls."

"Yes; and what was it?"

"What I have several times seen before—what is called Carl Conrad's Ghost," replied Paul Pearley, impressively.

"What is to be done?"

"Continue the search of this wing alone, for those cowards would never come back here."

"Never! And let us be done with it as quickly as possible."

The hint was taken, and the two officers continued their search for some time, and then returned to the library, where Mrs. Conrad awaited them.

"Your men deserted you, gentlemen?"

"Yes, madam."

"Is your search completed to your satisfaction?"

"Perfectly, madam, and we discovered only a ghost."

"My poor husband's, it is said; but you are sure you really saw something of the supernatural?"

"We saw a mystery we cannot explain."

"Good-night, Mrs. Conrad, and permit me, as an English officer, to congratulate you upon your son's escape."

"And I also offer my congratulations, madam, and you will not be again troubled by having your premises searched."

Mrs. Conrad bowed low, but made no reply, and Lord Norcross and Major Pearley took their leave, and found the frightened soldiers standing in a group talking over the startling sight they had beheld in the crumbling wing of the old mansion.

"Norcross?" said Major Pearley, as the two rode back to the fort ahead of the still trembling soldiers.

"Yes, Pearley."

"That weird-looking negro accompanied us for a purpose."

"I thought so."

"He guided us."

"Yes."

"And he discovered the ghost first, and it was his yell that startled the men as much as that white-robed form we saw."

"I believe you are right."

"And he started the race out of the building."

"Correct."

"Now if he was that afraid of Carl Conrad's ghost he would not live there in the old rookery, and his conduct convinces me of one thing, now I recall it."

"And what may that be?"

"That Cecil Conrad, the rebel, is secreted in that house, and we were nearing his hiding-place when the African gave that infernal yell."

"I believe you are right, in fact I am sure that you are," was the low reply of Lord Nevil Norcross, who was more impressed by what he had seen than he cared to admit even to himself.

CHAPTER VI.

OUTLAWED.

THERE were seven who sat down to breakfast at Elm Haven the morning after the escape of the Rebel Spy.

They were Sir George and Lady Lucille, with Judge Hazel, his wife, the admiral and the two officers who had made the midnight search of the old stone mansion, the home of the fugitive.

The admiral was not in a serene humor, for the fugitive had not been captured, and unless he was first caught he could not have the opportunity of pardoning him and thus holding Lady Lucille to her pledge.

The crew of the Sea Fox had scoured the coast in their boats, and reported no clew to the escaped prisoner.

Then Major Pearley had to report that his hussars had been abroad all night on the hunt, but without success.

Then came a pause and the question followed by Lady Lucille:

"What of your visit to the home of the fugitive last night, Major Pearley?"

"There is a report to make to the admiral, and to you, Sir George, on that expedition, but I intended doing so after breakfast."

"There was no clew?" the admiral asked, quickly.

"We saw Conrad's mother, sir, and Lieutenant Calder had already searched the place as well as his men would permit."

"His men, sir?" asked the admiral, sternly.

"Yes, sir, for they saw, or thought they saw, a ghost, and stampeded."

"Nonsense, all nonsense!"

"The place has the name of being haunted, you know, Admiral Chauncey," innocently said Lady Lucille.

"Yes, there is that talk about that old pirate, Carl Conrad's ghost being seen, but I, of course,

frowned down all such nonsense," Sir George remarked.

"Yet the ghost seems not to be a myth, as it certainly set the prisoner free, father."

"My child, don't get your head filled with superstition, for there is no knowing where it may lead you."

"My lord, both Lord Nevil and myself can vouch for having seen this mystery last night, which some are pleased to call Carl Conrad's ghost," said Major Pearley.

All at once turned toward him with interest, while he told the story of their midnight adventure in the old stone mansion.

"And your men fled?"

"Yes, admiral."

"But yourself and Norcross remained?"

"We did, my lord."

"And discovered nothing?"

"Nothing, sir."

"What did the woman say?"

"Mrs. Conrad said that many rumors came to her of persons having seen the ghost of her husband, but that she had never done so."

"She must have been a devoted wife to the man, not to have him haunt her after death," Mrs. Hazel remarked, and she was evidently impressed by all she had heard.

"Pearley, I will take half a hundred men from the cruiser, and you must spare me a hundred, and I will have that old rookery pulled down to-day."

"Admiral Chauncey, Mrs. Conrad has done you no harm, and it is her house, her all, and as a woman I plead for her!" and Lady Lucille's anger prevented her voice from having much of pleading in it.

"I think, my lord, that it would hardly be a wise act, as the place is an old landmark among the people here, and besides, the white-robed form we saw, and others have seen, sails on the inlet, the sea, and walks the forests as well, and the destruction of the old homestead will hardly be of any good as far as ridding the country of the—well, call it *ghost*!"

There was that in the manner of Lord Nevil Norcross when he spoke in earnest that was always impressive, and he was listened to attentively.

Then, too, he had been a king's page in boyhood, and a pet with his royal master as he grew to manhood, while when he came into his title as Lord of Norcross his wealth and rank had kept him a favorite.

The admiral cared not to go against his wishes, but said:

"It is a rebel's nest, I'll swear, too, and it may discover many secrets of importance to us to tear it down, and I shall, on that plea, have it done."

"You know best, my lord; but I will go and order the men in readiness."

"Father, I would like to go for a gallop, and if Colonel Norcross will serve as my escort I will be most glad of his company," said Lady Lucille with her sweetest of smiles.

"With pleasure, Lady Lucille, for I believe Sir George, has no need of my services just now," the young nobleman replied.

Sir George had his eye upon the rich, handsome, high-titled king's favorite for a son-in-law and so acquiesced willingly, and Lady Lucille went to her room to don her riding-habit.

"Major Pearley, I would like to request you to command this corps of destruction?" said the admiral.

"If you ask it, certainly, my lord, but I am anxious to mount those heavy guns upon the further cliff, commanding the haven, and if Burnett could relieve me I would like it."

"Certainly, I had not thought of him, and the exercise will do him good, after his long rest," and the admiral smiled grimly, for he had never liked the captain of the Sea Foe being on sick leave in the home of Sir George, and seeing Lady Lucille daily.

"I will go and order my men, sir," and with a look toward Lord Norcross, Major Pearley left the room.

Lord Nevil at once followed, and the hussar said:

"Be careful, for you must not let her get you into trouble."

"Who?"

"Why, the fair Lucille, Sir Blind Man."

"Ah! and how?"

"She proposed you as her escort, knowing Sir George would be only too glad, and she is going to warn Mrs. Conrad of danger."

"By Jupiter, but you are right, Pearley."

"Yes, and don't allow her to run you into a scrape, for if it is known that you went there before the destruction of the place, it might involve you; but let her go, and what she does must not be delayed, for of course Conrad is there."

"Of course he is," and Lord Nevil turned to greet Lady Lucille, who just then appeared, looking very beautiful in her riding-habit and plume-adorned hat.

"We go together as far as the fort, Major Pearley," said the maiden.

"And then, Lady Lucille?" asked the hussar.

"Oh, I have a wager with Lord Nevil that it is further from the cross-roads beyond the fort to Beacon Cliff, by the ridge road, than through

Refuge Glen, and I intend to settle it to-day by going one way and he the other, and meeting at the cliff, our horses not to go out of a walk."

"And you will take the ridge road, Lady Lucille?" significantly said the hussar.

"No, I shall take the glen road," was the reply, and the two officers cast at each other a quick glance of significance, for the *glen road* took her within a quarter of a mile of the old stone homestead!

Arriving at the fort, Lord Nevil and Lady Lucille passed in, while the hussar stopped to order out his hundred men for duty, under the command of Captain Burnett.

When the two reached the cross-roads, Lady Lucille said pleasantly:

"Now, my lord, we will settle this mooted question of which is the longest way to Beacon Cliff."

"And thus I am cheated out of your company, Lady Lucille, so I would rather yield the point."

"Oh, no! we will meet at the Beacon, I say, by the glen road, four miles away, and by the ridgeway, three miles."

"See who reaches there first, our pace being a walk."

The dragoon bowed and they started; but hardly had Lady Lucille gotten out of sight when her horse was urged into a rapid gallop, and fifteen minutes after she drew up at The Refuge Homestead.

Mrs. Conrad saw her and came to the door to be startled by the words:

"Quick! do what you deem best to save your son, for your house is to be torn down, stone by stone, to-day, in searching for him, and within the hour the soldiers will be here to do the work."

"I must not delay; but save him, for I know that you can."

"God bless you, Lady Lucille," broke earnestly from the lips of Mrs. Conrad.

But the maiden heard no more, for she dashed away like the wind, and regaining the glen road, drew her horse down to a walk, and upon arriving at the Beacon Cliff found Lord Nevil awaiting her.

"I give it up, my lord; the way I went is the longest," she said, serenely, and soon after they returned to Glen Haven, where the same persons that were at breakfast that morning, sat down to dinner in the evening, and Admiral Chauncey was in ill humor at the report of Captain Burnett that the "rookery had been leveled to the ground, but only the widow and the two Africans had been discovered as dwellers there, though in one wing secret retreats had been found."

"And the poor woman who was thus made homeless, Admiral Chauncey?" asked Lucille.

"She will doubtless find a home among her fellow rebels," was the unfeeling response, and taking a paper from his pocket the admiral continued: "I have this day sent a copy of this special order to all of his Majesty's commanders afloat and ashore, making Cecil Conrad an outlawed king's officer, to be hanged whenever and wherever taken, and it will be a lesson to these Americans who have dared take up arms against us."

"It is catching before hanging, my lord," said Lady Lucille with a defiant smile as they rose from the table and adjourned from the library.

CHAPTER VII.

WARNED.

WHEN Mrs. Conrad heard the startling words of Lady Lucille, that her home, the birthplace of her son, herself and her grandmother before her was to be leveled to the ground, her face paled, yet she did not lose her nerve for an instant while the maiden was before her.

When Lady Lucille dashed away a sob broke from the lips of the poor woman, and she wrung her hands nervously, and as though in pain, while she moaned bitterly.

But only for a few minutes did she show this weakness, for suddenly starting, she cried:

"She said within the hour, and I have no time to lose."

Quickly she nerved herself into perfect calmness and hastily retreated into the house, where Kaloo and Congo were at once summoned to her presence and given certain orders which they hastened to obey.

Then going up-stairs she opened a door at the further end of a long corridor and which led into the deserted, crumbling wing of the old building, and where people were wont to say spooks made their home.

The door led into a long hallway, in the center of which was a stairway descending to the floor below.

Here was a corridor, and at the further end of this a door.

A knock upon the iron-barred door caused it to be at once opened, and Cecil Conrad stood before his mother.

"Mother, there is danger, that brings you here in the daytime?" he said, quietly.

"Yes, Lady Lucille just rode up to say that Admiral Chauncey had ordered soldiers from the fort to come here and level our old house to

the ground, for they are convinced that you are here."

"God bless that sweet woman, and through her they will not find me."

"No, for depart at once by the underground passage to the cave chamber, and to-night Congo will bring you a horse and you can escape back into the American lines, and not go in your shallop by sea, as you had intended, my son."

"It will do as well, mother, and twenty-four hours more they will find me in the patriot service, and I will be able to strike back at my foes, cruel, ah so cruel as to rob you of your home, for what will you do?"

"Do not think of me, my son, for yours is the danger."

"But I do think of you and what will you do, mother?"

"I will hire men from the village to build me a little stone house here, my son, on the ruins of the old one, and you need feel no anxiety for myself and for others; but you must hasten away, for this room is to be stripped at once of all in it and the trap concealed."

"True, I will be off at once, so farewell mother, but if possible see me to-night."

"If possible, yes," and the woman hastily stepped upon a stone at one side of the chimney and her weight raised the next slab to it slowly out of its place.

As the one was lowered the other was raised, revealing a pit-like opening some two feet square.

When the framework that upheld the stone had risen three feet above the flooring, the one upon which stood Mrs. Conrad having descended that far, Cecil Conrad stepped down into the pit and, with another farewell, disappeared, holding a lantern, which he had lighted in his hand.

Then Mrs. Conrad stepped up from the pit she was in and slowly the stones began to go back into place again.

As they did so Congo and Kaloo arrived and at once began to bear the furniture from the room, after which the negroes scattered dust around, and along the hallways to give the appearance that it had not been visited for a long while.

The furniture was quickly distributed in the living rooms, Kaloo went to her kitchen work and Congo was working in the garden with a look of perfect unconcern, while Mrs. Conrad sat down by the window and took up some sewing.

So Captain Burnett found her when he rode up to the door followed by his crew, while the soldiers under his command had already formed a complete line around the mansion, thus hemming in Congo also, who appeared greatly alarmed at the presence of so many men in uniform.

"A word with you, madam," called out Captain Burnett, and Mrs. Conrad arose and came to the door.

"You are the Widow Conrad, I believe, the mother of Cecil Conrad the Rebel Spy?"

"I am, sir, and you are Captain Burnett, I believe, whose life my son risked his own to save?"

The shot went home and Godfrey Burnett flinched under its sting, but said angrily:

"Yes, I am Captain Burnett, and though grateful to your son for the service rendered me I cannot, as a British officer tolerate or protect him as a rebel spy, and I am forced, madam, to so thoroughly search this house, that I will take it down stone by stone but that I find his hiding-place."

"Oh, sir! would you destroy my home?"

"Not if you give up your son."

"Were my son's life at stake, sir, a thousand homes, had I them, might you raze to the ground before I would betray him."

"But I beg of you to believe me that Cecil Conrad is not in this mansion."

"You are a mother, so are not entitled to belief when your son's life is at stake."

"I must do my duty, so let my men remove your belongings, for down to the ground the old rookery must come."

"Pardon me, sir, for expecting mercy at your hands."

"I would ask your men to simply set my furniture yonder, beneath that tree."

"You are a plucky woman at heart, and your son inherits his indomitable courage from you, madam."

"I am sorry to render you homeless, but my orders are imperative."

"I do not seek your sympathy, sir, so obey your orders," and Mrs. Conrad called Congo and Kaloo to her aid, and some of the things she was most particular about were handled most carefully.

The crew of the Sea Foe particularly were most kind toward the poor woman, for they remembered how Cecil Conrad had saved the vessel from destruction and themselves from death.

They were careful in moving the things, while the soldiers went to work to demolish the old mansion without an atom of mercy.

With battering-rams, ropes and ladders the hundred and fifty men soon made a wreck of the old mansion, and when the sun was near its setting Admiral Chauncey and Sir George Har-

wood drove over to find the place a ruin, and that it had been demolished sufficiently to prove to them that no one could be in hiding there.

The homeless woman sat in her easy-chair among her goods and chattels, calmly sewing the while, but the admiral and Sir George both winced under the look she gave them, and involuntarily raised their hats, a salute she utterly ignored.

And when the sun went down the king's men marched back to the fort and their ship, and the homeless woman and her two faithful black friends were left alone amid the scene of desolation.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SPECTER SURF-SKIFF.

WHEN the last soldier had disappeared from the scene of ruin, which they had left behind them, Mrs. Conrad called to Congo.

"Yas, missus, I right here."

"You have told me that you were a chief in your own country of Africa, and have said that you could track your foes by day or night."

"Yas, missus, Congo was chief, and he follow his foe like dog follow deer here."

"Well, Congo, go now and find out if all of those soldiers have gone."

"See that not one remained as a spy upon us, for much depends upon it."

"Congo go now, missus," and the African disappeared, while Kaloo set to work to erect a temporary shelter for the night for her mistress.

It was an hour before Congo returned, and then he reported that not a soul was in sight.

"But Congo see ghost," said the African.

"Where?" and the woman asked the question with some anxiety.

"At Secret Basin; he say he take Massa Cecil in skiff, up coast, for bad soldiers on land to catch him if he go on horse."

"He knows best; but now help Kaloo to get supper, and you bring food with me to the cave chamber."

"Congo ready," was the reply.

In a short while, leaving Kaloo in the camp, Mrs. Conrad and Congo stole away in the darkness toward the spot where Cecil Conrad was in hiding.

It was in the midst of a pile of rocks, reached only by the means of a light ladder, which the African carried, and placed here and there where an ascent was to be made.

There, in a cave, was found the fugitive, a lantern on a rude table, which, with a chair and a cot, was the only furniture in the place.

In the rear of the cave was a tunnel-like opening which ran back a couple of hundred yards underground, after descending a ladder to its level.

It was this tunnel which had been taken advantage of by the builder of the old house to connect it with the pile of rocks, and thus make a means of escape from the mansion, if need came for it.

"Well, mother, I heard them at work tearing down the dear old house, and the dust at times came this far."

"The old home is destroyed, my son; but what care I, so that your life is safe."

"A retribution shall follow them for this," was the bitter reply of the young man, and then he suddenly asked:

"Who commanded the soldiers?"

"Captain Burnett; but his men were most kind to me, Cecil, and divided the best timbers and stones, so that they could be readily used in rebuilding a small house for me, and I shall dwell here, my son; yes, they shall not drive me from here. But I have brought you some food and clothing, and when all is safe Congo will come for you, as you must depart to-night, my son."

"Yes, mother, delays are dangerous," was the answer, and soon the fugitive was left alone once more.

When Mrs. Conrad returned to her temporary shelter she found there the one who had pledged his word to save her son, and she said quickly:

"Until Congo told me that he had seen you, I feared for your safety."

"No, I am always safe; but the boy must go, and at once," was the answer.

"In his shallop?"

"Oh, no, for that is not safe; but in my surf-skiff as he came."

"They may be watching for you, and give chase."

"So be it, they cannot catch me, for the wind is fresh and off the sea, and I do not fear them, so let Congo go for the boy at once."

Congo obeyed the request of his mistress to go after his young master by taking the ladder and departing in haste.

In a short while the two returned together, and the sailor clasped the hand of the one who had saved him from death, and said a few words in a low, earnest tone.

"We must be off, for we dare not delay," said the mysterious man, and he walked on toward the inlet, while Cecil Conrad, after bidding Congo and Kaloo farewell, followed slowly with his mother.

Ten minutes after the little surf-skiff, with

mainsail and jib set, and the white-robed man at the tiller, was standing swiftly out of the inlet on long tacks, while the moonlight, to a close observer only revealed that another was in the boat, lying at full length and covered with a white sheet.

So close into the wind did the surf-skiff eat her way that it almost seemed as if she was sailing against it, and so believed a sentinel stationed upon the cliff near Elm Haven Mansion, whose eyes suddenly fell upon the weird-looking little craft.

"The ghost craft!" yelled the sentinel, in alarm, and in his amazement he discharged his musket at the little skiff, while he took to his heels toward the mansion.

The discharge of the sentinel's musket caused the alarm to be sounded at the fort and on board the Sea Foe in the haven beyond, while it brought those in the library of the mansion out upon the piazza.

"Fool! Coward! halt!" shouted Sir George, as the flying form of the sentinel was seen rushing toward the house.

"What ails you, sirrah?" roared the admiral, and his thunder tones brought the man to a halt at the piazza steps.

"The ghost craft, my lord! Carl Conrad's ghost!" the soldier responded, in trembling tones.

"Where?" demanded the admiral.

"In the inlet, my lord, and sailing *right against the wind*, and out to sea, sir, out to sea."

"Colonel Norcross, at once hasten to the cliff, hail the Sea Foe, and order Burnett to get up anchor and start out to sea in chase of that craft, and to capture it."

"Yes, my lord," and Lord Nevil Norcross hastened away.

"Major Pearley, be good enough to hasten to the fort and send a number of soldiers down to take the boats in the inlet and cut off that craft from returning to its retreat there."

"Yes, sir," and away darted the young commandant of the fort, while Lady Lucille suggested that they go the cliff and see if the specter skiff could then be seen.

The sentinel led the way, and when the party arrived at the point where he had stood no craft was visible.

"Let us go the cliff, for there we can see up and down the coast, Sir George," and they hurried to the point of observation, and all called out in chorus:

"Here it is!"

And there was the skiff, an eighth of a mile off the shore, having just rounded the last rock in running the dangerous gantlet out from the inlet.

The sea was brilliant under the moonlight, and an eight-knot breeze was cresting the waves that rolled landward and beat savagely against the cliff upon which the party stood.

In the haven the Sea Foe was visible, setting sail and getting up anchor, and up the inlet a group of soldiers were embarking in boats placed there that afternoon to aid as a guard for the inlet, for it was said that but one pilot on the coast could run a vessel in and out of the inlet, and that one was Cecil Conrad, and the fact that the white skiff had run the gantlet caused many to feel the more certain that Carl Conrad's ghost was at the tiller.

Once the white skiff with its snowy sails and white-robed helmsman had run the perilous channel, the wind sent her swiftly along down the coast at a speed that really seemed beyond human agency.

"Aha! there comes the cruiser out of the haven, and now yonder ghostly craft will be taken," cried the admiral exultantly, as the Sea Foe felt the wind and went dashing away in chase of the weird surf-skiff.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHASE.

"You can sit up now, Cecil, and tend the sheet ropes, for I think we will need all the speed we can get out of the skiff, as that sentinel gave the alarm and it will send the cruiser in chase."

So said the stern-faced helmsman of the little surf-skiff, as the craft was headed in its course along the coast, having dashed out to sea in safety through the perilous channel.

The form lying at length in the skiff sat up, and with the sheet around his shoulders took position to render all the aid possible.

The surf-skiff was a long, narrow, deep craft, with high sides, decked over forward, and with a cockpit protected by high combing.

She carried a large main-sail and jib, and fairly flew over the waters, looking indeed like a phantom craft in the moonlight.

A better sea-boat could not be found, nor a fleetier one for her size, and with the wind blowing fresh and running along the waves she sailed along in a way that could not but please those two guiding her destinies, and amaze those who beheld her.

Captain Burnett had been disturbed at his supper, by the hail of Lord Nevil, to get up sail at once and go in chase of the ghost craft, which had just stood out of the inlet to sea.

Captain Burnett was not in a pleasant mood.

He had intended to ask Lady Lucille to become his wife, and his vanity had at first caused him to believe that she would accept; but he had been banished, as it were, from her presence, before he had been able to win her, while the admiral, and two formidable young rivals in Lord Nevil and Major Pearley were with her constantly.

His cabin was an elegant one, but Captain Godfrey Burnett preferred the rooms he had so long enjoyed at Elm Haven Mansion, while laid up with his broken arm.

Now when called upon to go "ghost-hunting" he did not relish it, after his hard day's work destroying The Refuge Homestead; but when Lord Nevil Norcross called out that the specter craft was in full sight, he was anxious to win favor by capturing this weird mystery of the sea.

So the captain sent his men to their posts with a will, and the Sea Foe was moving seaward as soon as her anchor had left the bottom.

The night was perfect, and the run out from the haven to sea was quickly made, when every eye swept the coast up and down for the mysterious craft.

Upon the cliff was visible the party from the mansion, and Captain Burnett readily recognized by her white dress the one whom he had come to madly love, for outside of his desire for riches, the naval officer was honest in his regard for the Lady Lucille.

The admiral was there, Sir George, and the moonlight was reflected upon two other uniforms, which Captain Burnett knew covered the fine forms of Lord Nevil and the major of hussars.

"They shall not win her," and he was going to work himself into an ugly humor, when Lieutenant Jules Girard, his first officer, called out:

"Aho, the specter! There she flies!"

All eyes glanced in the direction the lieutenant's glass was turned, and at once a chorus of voices were heard calling out that they sighted the surf-skiff.

Instantly the cruiser, which was standing straight out to sea to get an offing which would command a view up and down the coast, eased off her sheets and went dashing along parallel with the shore and with the wind over her port quarter.

The surf-skiff was fully a league away, a white spot upon the waves, and so plainly revealed in the moonlight.

She was on the same course as the cruiser, only a mile nearer inshore.

But though the Sea Foe began the chase, and sail after sail was crowded upon her until she looked like a huge snow-cloud driving along over the waters, there were many upon her decks that not only deemed the chase a useless one, but also expected misfortune to fall upon them.

If any of the officers so felt they kept it to themselves, and all eyes would turn from the distant surf-skiff to the face of their stern captain.

As though to show to the admiral that he was in earnest, Captain Burnett called out in a voice heard by those upon the cliff:

"Clear that forward pivot gun for action, and I will fire it!"

The gun, a long forty-two, was cleared and loaded, and going forward Captain Burnett aimed and fired the piece.

The deep roar awakened a hundred echoes along the rocky coast, and the shrieking ball went flying along on its course to fall just astern of the flying surf-skiff.

"Well done, Burnett! try it again!" thundered the admiral from the cliff, while the crew cheered their captain's splendid aim.

Again and again was the pivot-gun fired, and each time with remarkably true aim, yet the surf-skiff still held on.

The lights of the little coast village were passed by the Sea Foe and left astern, and the cliff, and white walls of Elm Haven Mansion disappeared in the distance; but still the surf-skiff held on, and the cruiser came on in hot pursuit, and steadily gained, for after three hours had passed they were only a mile apart.

"He will have to head out to round the Devil's Backbone," said Jules Girard, alluding to a reef of rocks that jutted out from the mainland a long distance, and formed a dread place of danger for a vessel to venture near.

Shoreward were high, cedar-clad cliffs and masses of rocks piled in wild confusion, and along the coast on either side to make a landing even in calm weather was impossible, and sure destruction would come to the mariner who dared run close in when the sea was wild.

The wind had steadily increased as the hours wore by, and the sea was becoming rough and foam-covered, especially nearer shore; but the surf-skiff still held on, and more, showed no indication of beading up seaward to round the dangerous reef known as the Devil's Backbone.

Some time before Captain Burnett had ceased firing, as he saw he was gaining upon the little white craft, and he was anxious to capture her unhurt, with her mysterious helmsman.

In a conversation with Jules Girard the two had decided that as the prisoner escaped through the aid of the one who was at the tiller of the weird-looking boat, he was now being carried

afar from danger by the same means; and to capture Carl Conrad's ghost and Cecil Conrad together, Captain Burnett thought would be honor enough for him for one night's work.

"He still holds on, sir, right into the very breakers that are so wild in the course of the Devil's Backbone," said Jules Girard, who had his glass to his eye.

"Yes, and he is going straight to his doom," replied the British commander.

"The craft is going to its doom sir, *if it is not a specter of the sea!*" impressively returned the lieutenant, as he gazed upon the mysterious little vessel ahead, flying straight to destruction upon the reef.

CHAPTER X.

INTO THE BREAKERS.

"THAT gunner is a good shot, Cecil," said the white-robed helmsman of the surf-skiff, as the balls from the pivot-gun on the cruiser fell around the little craft, and too dangerously near to be comfortable.

"Yes, sir, a good shot, indeed; but, somehow, I feel that he will do us no damage."

"And so I feel, Cecil."

To one who had seen the faces of the speakers, and heard their words, it would never have been supposed that their lives were at stake, for the helmsman had spoken with a coolness that seemed utter indifference to danger, while the young sailor's face showed not a trace of dread or anxiety.

"They have ceased firing, sir, and are gaining upon us."

"Yes, they feel sure of their game, and but for you they would be, Cecil."

"But for me, sir?"

"Yes."

"I cannot see just how I am doing anything more than trimming the sheets as they need them, sir."

"You see the Devil's Backbone?"

"Yes, sir."

"We are down here to leeward, and to round it we would have to beat up to seaward half a mile, say."

"Certainly."

"In that time the cruiser would overhaul us, and we would be taken."

"There is no doubt of that, sir, and I have supposed you meant to run into the gap."

"That is just it, and our only chance; but you remember that I never ran that deadly gantlet, where you did do so when a mere boy."

"Ah, yes, sir, I understand you now."

"You wish me to take the tiller?"

"I do."

"It will be desperate work with the sea as wild as it is."

"I know that, and it will be that much more in our favor, for they will see us disappear in the heavy spray thrown upward by the reef, and Carl Conrad's ghost will indeed be dreaded when to-morrow night it is seen in the inlet."

"I will change now, sir, for I must study the approach to the reef."

"There is no fear of your not running the gantlet, Cecil, and that is why I held in so close, for I knew at the way the cruiser sailed she would force us ashore beyond the reef, and that meant a struggle for life in the breakers."

"I have perfect confidence in your going through, Cecil."

If the white-robed helmsman had said what he did to encourage the youth, it had that effect evidently from the cool reply.

"And I'll run the gantlet in safety, sir."

Then the two changed places, and as they did so a shot illumined the bows of the cruiser and an iron solid shot came flying above the heads of the occupants of the surf-skiff.

"I'll try it again, for I would give much to wreck the craft with a shot, instead of having it dashed on to destruction," said Captain Burnett, who, seeing that the mysterious boat was running apparently upon the reef, determined to open fire again.

Shot after shot followed, in quick succession, and the balls were seen now and then to strike so near as to drench the skiff with spray; but the white craft held on as fleetly as before, and the sea was so rough now good aim could not be taken.

"Bring her 'round, Girard, and give him a broadside—steady as you are—fire!"

The word fire was followed by the roar of a broadside from the schooner, and every eye watched the effect.

But the surf-skiff sailed on as serenely as before, and held her course straight for the reef and at its most terrible point almost beneath the overhanging rocks of the cliff.

"Give him another broadside, Girard!" shouted Godfrey Burnett, now enraged at the result of the hot fire of the cruiser.

And once more the broadside guns of the schooner belched forth an iron hail that went hurtling after the little craft, but, as before, no damage was done.

"I'll try a third broadside and then we must go about, for we are standing in here too close for safety," said Captain Burnett, and for the third time the starboard broadside thundered forth its iron missiles.

"It is no use, Captain Burnett, to fire upon

that craft, and the men are getting into an ugly humor that you persist in doing so," said Jules Girard, coming aft.

"Hail do the men dare dictate to me?" was the hot rejoinder.

"They say frankly that they are chasing a sea specter, and that they will not fire another shot, and I advise you not to demand it, would you save trouble."

"You know your crew, and that they would fight a frigate if you so ordered, but yonder craft is different."

"Nonsense! they are superstitious fools."

"They will demand that you respect their sailor superstition, captain, for I assure you that they are in an ugly mood."

"I will order another broadside at once."

"Stay, take my advice, for it can but end in your losing caste, as they will not obey."

"Be warned, I beg of you, captain, for the men are trembling with fear."

"See! that craft is flying straight upon that reef, and they swear she will go over it unharmed."

Godfrey Burnett knew that his lieutenant was not a man to speak as he had without reason, and he had no desire to be humbled by his men refusing to obey his orders, so he did not give the order to fire another broadside.

Instead, he turned his glass upon the flying craft and saw that she was driving like a mad racer, under full sail, directly into where the breakers leaped high into the air and cast showers of spray fifty feet above them.

The moon was at its highest, and the surf-skiff was now not half a mile away, and distinctly visible with the naked eye.

"We must go about, Girard, or it will be too late," cried Captain Burnett, and the men sprang to their posts of duty, and the schooner went around as though upon a pivot.

Then, as she began to eat her way up to windward, all eyes turned upon the mysterious craft.

"She is gone!"

The cry arose in a perfect chorus, for the little vessel had disappeared.

"She has gone to her destruction—we drove her upon the Devil's Backbone, and I shall so report it," said Captain Burnett, as he swept the cove for the missing surf-skiff.

"She has gone, but I doubt if it is the end of her," said Jules Girard in a low, earnest tone.

"What do you mean, Girard?" asked Captain Burnett, impressed by his manner.

"I am like the men, Captain Burnett, for I half-way believe the craft is a sea phantom."

Captain Burnett made no reply, but he confessed himself completely at a loss to solve the mystery of the phantom-like surf-skiff and its white-robed helmsman.

CHAPTER XI.

A SURPRISE FOR THE SEA FOE.

"SAIL, HO!"

The cry rung out from the foretop of the Sea Foe, soon after she had put about to stand away from the dangerous breakers into the midst of which the surf-skiff had so boldly dashed and disappeared from the sight of all upon the deck of the cruiser.

The call of the lookout changed the thoughts of all from the misty craft they had been in pursuit of, to the stranger, and all eyes were bent upon the sea to discover who and what the strange sail was.

"Whereaway, my men?" called out Captain Burnett, who had hastily swept the sea with his glass.

"Astern, sir, and coming out from under the land."

"Ah yes, I see her—a brig and an armed one from her looks."

"She was close inshore, in mischief doubtless, and seeing us stood out to sea."

"Take a look at her, Girard, and see what you think of her?"

The lieutenant took a long survey through his glass and said slowly:

"She looks more Spanish than American, sir, and is as trim as a yacht, while she certainly is armed and does not seem to be so very anxious to run away from us."

"I'll stand out further and then head toward him to see what we can make of him," and Captain Burnett continued his interested gaze upon the stranger until the cruiser had gained an offing which enabled her to stand down the coast toward the brig.

The order was accordingly given to do so, and the men were told to be on the alert, as an armed vessel was near which might prove to be a foe.

"She is not English, captain," said Jules Girard after a closer look.

"No, but I know what she is, Girard."

"You recognize her, sir?"

"I do."

"And she is not a king's craft?"

"The only king she acknowledges, Girard, treads her deck, and her flag is hunted down by every nation on the globe."

"Hail a pirate?"

"Yes, and I'll tell you when I saw her last."

"Yes, sir."

"You remember after Cecil Conrad's cruise he got leave and came home?"

"I do, sir."

"One night we had a terrible storm, and a vessel began to fire signal guns off-shore, which took all of us from the mansion of Sir George Harwood out to the cliff."

"There we beheld yonder brig, for I am sure I am not mistaken, drifting ashore with the incoming tide, for it was a dead calm, and having no anchor, while she was in a bad condition generally, for the storm was coming down upon her with fearful fury."

"In the face of that storm a boat went out of the inlet to her rescue, and in it was Cecil Conrad and that African slave of his."

"They reached the brig just in time, and he ran her into the inlet—"

"In the storm, sir?"

"Yes, and when morning came she was gone, and that was the craft all suspected of being a rebel cruiser, which he, though a king officer had saved."

"Yes, sir, and instead I recall now, he reported her before the court-martial before which he was tried, as having been a pirate craft, but said that he did not know this fact until he had taken her again out to sea."

"So he said, but I believe him to have been in league with the pirates."

"At any rate yonder brig is the craft he saved and her name is the Blue Wing, while the pirate chief is known as Balfour the Buccaneer."

"What a victory for us could we but capture her, sir," eagerly said Jules Girard.

"Yes, for she is no specter craft, but a pirate and a terror to our coast, while it is said that her chief has large treasures on board with him."

"I tell you, Girard, our fame and our fortune are made if we capture yonder brig."

"We must do it then, Captain Burnett."

"Yes, for the Sea Foe has no equal in speed, and we are the pirates' equal at least in men and guns."

"Put the brig under fighting sails, Mr. Girard, and call the men to quarters."

So saying Captain Burnett descended to his cabin to get his fighting cutlass and put on his boarding helmet, while the crew sprang nimbly to the guns, and the sailmen shortened the canvas of the schooner by taking in the huge square-sail and topsails.

The brig was now not a mile distant, but suddenly became very suspicious of the cruiser, having seemingly suspected her of being a merchant craft, and began to hold off.

"Throw a shot over him, Mr. Girard, to see what he will do."

The gun was fired and the effect was rather more than had been expected, for the brig let go her entire broadside, and when the smoke of her guns drifted away she was seen to be in full flight and crowding on all sail to increase her speed.

"There he goes, and it is just like those coward pirates, to attack a lamb and run from a wolf."

"Crowd on all sail and we'll soon bring him to terms."

The second officer then reported one man killed and two wounded by the fire of the brig, and this but nerved the crew to wish the more to grapple with the pirate, and the Sea Foe was fairly covered with canvas, while her bow guns kept up a hot fire upon the fugitive craft.

But the fire was returned from a large pivot-gun upon the brig, and in spite of the rough sea the stranger's fire was very accurate.

And more, it was soon seen that the brig was gaining upon the Sea Foe.

In vain did all try to say that such was not the case, for the fact was too evident, and the pivot forty-two was fired rapidly to try and cripple the nimble craft ahead.

But it was give and take, and if the cruiser hurt her adversary, in turn she also suffered, while the brig was steadily drawing away the while and would before an hour more be out of range.

"It is a pirate, for if a rebel he would fight us, as we are so nearly equal," said Captain Burnett.

"Yes, those fellows like to give hard knocks, but wince at receiving them, captain."

"What do you think of our chances of catching him, sir?"

"Very poor," and Captain Burnett added an oath to emphasize his feelings in the matter.

At midnight the brig was barely in range, and when dawn came she was far away in the lead.

But the cruiser still held on, though, of course, there was no firing.

When it was seen that to catch the brig was utterly impossible, the Sea Foe was put about and her course laid for Elm Haven, for Captain Burnett did not wish to keep the admiral waiting too long, should it be necessary to depart from the hospitable home of Sir George on any special duty.

The moon was just coming up out of the sea when the cruiser drew in sight of the lights of Elm Haven Mansion, and the glimmering light fell upon the cliff and iron-bound coast.

The sea was still, and only a five-knot breeze was wafting the cruiser along toward the little haven.

Suddenly from the lookout aloft came the startled and startling cry:

"Sail ho! the Sea Specter! the Sea Specter!"

"Whereaway!" shouted back Captain Burnett, while he could see that the words of the lookout fairly frightened his crew.

"Two points off the port bow, sir, just running into the inlet!"

"I see her! Ready there, all of you, to give her a broadside!"

But not a man of the crew moved.

"Did you hear? To your guns all, and stand ready to fire on that craft."

Still not a man moved to obey.

All eyes were turned upon the little craft, and there was a death-like silence on board the cruiser as they gazed upon the mysterious surf-skiff.

Captain Burnett was losing his temper, when Lieutenant Girard stepped quickly to his side and whispered:

"Captain Burnett, yonder craft is the Sea Specter, and not a man of your crew will turn a gun upon it, so I beg of you not to repeat the order to fire!"

"It would be useless now, you see, the infernal craft has run into the inlet out of sight."

"By heaven, Girard, but we must solve this mystery in some way," and Captain Burnett turned gloomily away, while the Sea Foe held on her way into the haven under the shadows of the cliff and dropped anchor, while a gloom seemed to fall like a pall upon the crew.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RETURN.

CAPTAIN BURNETT could plainly see that his crew were in a dangerous mood, and that an open mutiny would have followed any act on his part to force them to fire upon the Sea Specter.

So he wisely let them have their own way, and ran into the haven and anchored.

It was not late, so he decided to go right on up to the mansion and make his report.

He found the lights glistening brightly from the lower rooms, which told him that the family were still in the library and parlors, and he ascended the steps of the piazza and let the knocker fall lightly.

A servant ushered him into the parlor, where Sir George and his guest, the admiral, sat, with Lady Lucille and Major Pearley, the latter seemingly having entered but a few minutes prior to the coming of the naval officer.

"Ah, Burnett, back again, and just in time to explain how it was that the surf-skiff escaped you," said the admiral.

"You know of her escape, then, sir?"

"Major Pearley just came in with the news that the sentinel stationed upon the inlet, where we keep one on duty now, saw Carl Conrad's ghost sail serenely up toward his home."

"A boat was started in pursuit, but no word has returned yet of the result."

"So you let the craft escape you, Captain Burnett, upon a night as bright almost as day, the very wind and sea to suit your vessel, and with no place for those in the boat to land upon the coast for leagues, after passing the village fort?"

The tone of the admiral was cutting, and Godfrey Burnett winced under the manner and words.

"He escaped me, Admiral Chauncey, yes; and yet, until I arrived off the inlet and saw that craft running into it, I believed the man, ghost, or whatever he be, at the bottom of the ocean, and so will every man swear who was on the deck of the Sea Foe."

"We drove him hard, sir—"

"And burnt a great deal of powder and wasted a great deal of iron?"

"We did fire constantly, sir, and with no result other than to dash the spray over the strange craft, for he sailed serenely along, and we headed him off in the curve of what is known as the Devil's Backbone, a ragged reef that juts out into the sea from a point of towering rocks."

"You certainly had him in a trap then, Captain Burnett, for I know the place well, and it is the most dangerous on the coast, and to land there in calm weather is utterly out of the question," Sir George Harwood said.

"We were sure of either capturing the craft, sir, or driving him upon the reef, and I held on until the Sea Foe was in danger, for the craft steered straight for the breakers at their wildest point."

"To our amazement and the superstitious horror of the crew, the mysterious helmsman sent his craft directly into the breakers, and it disappeared while I even turned my broadsides upon it."

"That any craft could escape in such a maelstrom of waters none of us believed, and I headed out to sea to discover a brig coming from under the land beyond the reef."

"I recognized it as the Blue Wing, the buccaneer brig that Cecil Conrad the rebel spy piloted into the inlet that night of storm here, and at once gave chase."

"But to my amazement the brig outfooted me, and we kept up a running fight in which I received some damage to bulwarks and spars and lost several men, but yet I am sure I hurt

the buccaneer, though he dropped me rapidly, and at noon I gave up the chase."

"I thought your vessel was deemed the fleetest in these waters, Captain Burnett?"

"And so she is considered, sir, but the brig overmatched her, I am sorry to say."

"So you missed the pirate, too?"

"Yes, admiral, and upon arriving off the inlet the moon was rising and revealed that specter skiff going in through the dangerous channel to Refuge Inlet, and so worked up were my men by the sight, that when I ordered a broadside turned upon him not a man would move to obey."

"Ha! Mutiny?"

"In regard to firing upon a craft they are now sure is not sailed by mortal hands the men did mutiny, Lord Chauncey, and yet they would not quail did I go into action with a ship of the line when death was certain."

"And your officers, sir?"

"Were also impressed, as I could plainly see, even to Girard, while I am free to confess I cannot solve the mystery of that craft, which I saw go to pieces in the breakers."

"It is certainly remarkable, Captain Burnett, and I believe that you did your duty; but it devolves upon you to capture that mysterious craft and solve the mystery."

"But tell me: did you see more than one person on the craft?"

"I thought, sir, when she neared the breakers that I saw two forms moving about in the boat, yet I was not certain."

"Still, Lieutenant Girard thought the same as did also several of the men."

"Then the craft carried that rebel spy away to safety."

"She carried him into the breakers— Ah! Lord Nevil," and Sir George turned as Lord Nevil Norcross entered and said:

"I come, Pearley, to make a report to you, for your boats have returned and I told the officer in charge I would tell you the result."

"And this white mystery?" eagerly asked the admiral.

"Disappeared like smoke, sir, the officer said, for they drove her right into the head of the inlet, among the rocks, and when they searched there no boat or wreckage even could be seen."

"This is marvelous," and the admiral's manner showed that he too was becoming impressed with what had occurred.

But after a moment he said, reassured:

"There is some clever trickery in all this, aided by daring and skill, and I'll give a thousand pounds, of the king's money, to the one who solves the mystery."

"It is all that fellow Conrad, the rebel spy," he added, after a pause.

"But the mysterious boat was seen long before Mr. Conrad's being a prisoner, admiral, and you know that he was rescued by this—well Carl Conrad's ghost," said Lady Lucille.

"Then who is it that sails the white surf-skiff?" the admiral asked.

But no one answered, and as the question had no response, the mystery of the surf-skiff remained a mystery still.

And as Colonel Norcross and Major Pearley returned to their quarters together that night, they discussed the strange affair over and over, and both agreed that the doings of whoever was known as Carl Conrad's ghost was beyond their solution.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HOME OF THE HELMSMAN.

THE craft sighted from the deck of the Sea Foe, when heading in for an anchorage at Elm Haven, was indeed some other than the strange white surf-skiff which had proven such a mystery to all who had seen it.

At the helm sat the white-robed form who had before guided her destinies, and she had held on her way along the coast and made a run into Refuge Inlet.

Her helmsman had seen the schooner long before she sighted him, but with a certain pleasure in defying the big vessel-of-war he had held on, hoping to be discovered.

He soon saw from the movements of the Sea Foe that he was seen, and yet he held quietly along into the inlet.

That he might meet boats there he did not doubt; but somehow he seemed devoid of fear.

The sentinel on the high bank, with the moonlight glancing upon his bright musket-barrel, he discovered some time before the man saw his craft, for when the soldier did sight him he sprung away at a run for the barracks.

It was not long before a crowd of soldiers came rushing down from the fort to the shore, and entering the two boats kept there pulled away in hot pursuit.

And yet the haste was not really so great as it might have been, for the soldiers were not too anxious to overhaul the mysterious craft.

The wind was light yet the surf-skiff seemed to sail swiftly along, and had the lead of a mile of the boats.

It held its course straight toward the head of the inlet and did not turn into the little basin which was the harbor of the Conrad boats.

On beyond, the inlet wound for a quarter of a

mile, narrowing until it ended in a number of tiny pools, or basins.

Straight toward the rocks the helmsman headed, and springing out in the water which was waist-deep, he raised the stern of his boat and pushed it over a reef into a pool beyond.

Across this he went, with the pursuing boats plainly in sight, right toward an overhanging cliff, when getting into his skiff again he quickly took down his mast, sail and all, and the boat shot up against what appeared to be a solid rock.

Instead it was a screen of boards, neatly fitting into the entrance to a cavern, and painted so as to resemble the rock itself.

Sea moss and weeds grew over it so as to hide it the better, and when in place a man three feet from it would never suspect the clever cheat.

Into the cavern floated the boat, and the helmsman quickly arranged it into place again, and then pushed his skiff on through the dark tunnel until it came into a pool where a craft treble its size could float.

Around, on all sides towered the rocks, and upon the summit grew a number of cedars and pines.

Making his boat fast to a small platform the man ascended a ladder to the top of the rocks where there was a snug little cabin overshadowed by stunted pines.

From his position it could be then seen that the top of the rocks where he had located were unapproachable save by way of a boat thorough the cavern.

But from there he could see the inlet, with the sea beyond, and the piles of stones marking the ruined homestead of the Conrads.

His eyes also fell upon the head of the inlet, and he gazed down with the utmost complacency upon the boats in the waters not a hundred yards from him.

They had come to a standstill when searching the reef over which he had sailed his boat, for beyond were solid, towering rocks, and they had seen the mysterious craft disappear there like a puff of smoke.

He laughed bitterly as he saw them slowly pull back down the inlet and muttered:

"Superstitious fools!"

Then he walked over to where the rocks overhung a glen and taking up a roll which proved to be a rope-ladder he threw it over and quickly descended, and walked briskly away toward the ruins of Refuge Homestead.

Beneath the shelter which Congo and Kaloo had improvised for her, sat Mrs. Conrad, a lantern on the table by her side, while she was engaged in some handiwork.

Kaloo nodded on a chair near her, and Congo was fast asleep on a rug, thrown near the fire outside.

Suddenly Congo started as a step fell near him and he beheld the tall, white-robed form of the man who was known as Carl Conrad's ghost.

"Lor' but I was a-dreamin' an' yer did skeer me," cried Congo with a laugh as he recognized the one who had so startled him.

Passing on, after a nod to Congo, the man entered the shelter and Mrs. Conrad rose to greet him, while Kaloo slipped out and joined her African lord and master.

"I am so glad you are back, again, for I was almost in despair when I heard the guns which told that your going out was discovered."

"And my son?"

"We were discovered by a sentinel, lately placed upon the cliff over the inlet, and his firing off his musket caused the Sea Foe to give quick chase; but we held our own until we neared the Devil's Backbone, when Cecil took the helm and ran the skiff right through the reef into the basin among the rocks, and we were safe, for those on the cruiser believed us lost."

"We heard firing, and climbing the rocks saw the schooner go off in chase of a brig which Cecil declared was the vessel of Balfour the Buccaneer."

"The next morning Cecil left on foot for the patriot camps, while in the afternoon, I rowed the skiff out through the reef, for the sea was comparatively calm, and held on for hours, but was discovered by the sentinel again while coming up, and chased by two boats that gave it up at the rocks."

"The cruiser also sighted me, for she has returned to the inlet; but there need be no more fear, as I shall keep close for a few days."

"And you?"

"The villagers came in crowds to-day and have already done much in building me a new home, and it soon will be finished, while many wished me to come and live with them, particularly pressing being Katie Clyde, the daughter of the landlord of the Golden Anchor Inn."

"But of course I refused all."

"It is better so, for your home is here."

"I will go now, but let Congo bring me some provisions to-morrow night, and keep me informed of any movement of importance that may occur."

"Good-night," and the man of mystery strode from the presence of Mrs. Conrad and wended his way back to his own desolate retreat to seek the rest even his iron form now much needed.

And the mother of the fugitive from the gallows, bent her head in gratitude for the escape of her noble boy and muttered earnestly: "Now will my splendid boy be able to win a name for himself as an American patriot and strike back at his cruel British foes."

CHAPTER XIV. THE PATRIOT SAILOR.

THE Colonists had struck several blows against the forces of the English king, and in seaports held by the Americans, vessels were being fitted out as privateers, to prey upon British commerce, so that war, cruel and determined, had already begun when Cecil Conrad had resigned his commission as a lieutenant in the Royal Navy.

That resignation, it has been seen, was not accepted by Admiral Chauncey, but instead, the young American officer holding a king's commission had been ordered to Boston, where bitter accusations of treachery had been made against him, and in spite of past good services rendered, he had been sentenced to be hanged at the yard-arm as a rebel spy.

But this determined Cecil Conrad the more to draw his sword in defense of the patriot cause, and when he at last came in sight of the American camps, he could hardly restrain a shout of joy.

His desire was to go as a sailor, to endeavor to work his way up to the quarter-deck of a vessel-of-war; but, almost penniless and friendless, he was not sure that his wishes would be gratified, and if ordered to military duty ashore, he decided that he would accept what position was given him, and try to prove his worthiness to receive a commission afloat.

The advanced forces under General Arno were camped some dozen leagues from where Cecil Conrad had gone ashore, and he had walked the distance at a pace that brought him in sight of the flag floating over the camps ere the sun had touched the western horizon.

He had with him his all in a bundle swung upon his back, and he was dressed in his sailor suit, but was travel-stained and weary.

A sentinel at an outpost halted him, and when he asked to see the commanding general, he was taken under guard to headquarters.

General Arno was a stern, brusque man, and when the young sailor appeared before him, he eyed him curiously, and asked abruptly:

"Well, sir, who are you, and what do you want?"

It was a different reception from what Cecil Conrad had expected, for he had supposed that every good right arm offered to the patriot cause would be welcomed; but he said quietly, and with a salute:

"I am an American, sir, and my name is Cecil Conrad, while I am here to volunteer in the patriot service."

"It would be well said, sir, if you have proof of your words."

The hot blood rushed into the face of the young sailor, but he checked a quick retort and said:

"Do volunteers, sir, to the cause of the Colonies have to give proof of their good intentions?"

"Often, yes; but may I ask what your career has been?"

"I have been reared on the sea, as it was, sir, and I am a fair sailor and coast pilot, from the Kennebec to Montauk Point."

"Is that all, sir?"

"I am willing to serve my country in any capacity, sir, that you may deem me suited to fill, and I believe, sir, I can lead a body of troops to make a valuable capture of light guns, several heavy pieces, and stores and munitions of war."

"Ah! and where?"

"At a fort erected on the coast to protect the home, and a harbor near it, of an English general, Sir George Harwood."

"The inland fort is a mile away, and upon a hill, and there are stored the munitions of war, and half a dozen heavy guns hauled there by wagon from Boston to mount on a cliff commanding the harbor."

"A dash upon the fort by night would take it, and much could be captured of value and brought off, while, sir, a cruiser lies almost constantly in the little harbor, and a force in boats could board and carry her if surprised at night."

"You have a large plan cut out, sir."

"It is a possible one, sir, as I know how to guide a land force there to surprise the fort, and thence could lead a crew around to attack the cruiser in boats, both making the attack at the same time, while perhaps both Admiral Lord Chauncey and General Sir George Harwood might be captured."

Several of the general's staff were with him in his quarters, and at these plans proposed by the young sailor they seemed delighted and only anxious to carry out the plot.

But the general wore a cynical smile and seemed not to be enthusiastic over the plan, and asked almost indifferently:

"What is the size of the schooner, and her crew?"

"A three hundred and fifty ton schooner, with square-sail forward, and one hundred and thirty officers and men, sir, while she has a bat-

tery of ten guns and is as fleet as any craft in the British Navy."

"And the force at the fort?"

"Some three hundred men, sir, consisting of a company of heavy artillery, two of infantry, a light battery and a squadron of hussars."

"What would be your plan of attack?"

"To mount the entire attacking force, guide those who were to carry the fort to a certain point, and then lead the others around to the shore of the haven, and there are plenty of boats there to carry them off to the schooner."

"When the attack on the cruiser begins, soldiers would be sent to the relief of the vessel and then the land force could carry the fort."

"An excellent plan, sir, if your statements were correct; but I have word here now from a spy in Boston, that five hundred more men have been sent to garrison the fort, while that same cruiser's crew has been increased by an additional forty men, and a smaller schooner-of-war has been ordered to the rendezvous in the same haven."

"Thus you see my men would simply be led into a trap both on the water and ashore."

"I knew nothing of this extra force, sir, being sent, and certainly supposed that it would be a gallant blow for the Americans to strike, and the results would be considerable."

"Your name is Cecil Conrad, you say?" and the general took up a paper before him and glanced over it.

"Yes, sir."

"You did not tell me that you had been a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, sir."

"I expected to do so, sir, in time."

"Nor did you tell me that, as a pilot, you saved this same cruiser Sea-Foe from destruction."

"I was an officer on board of her at the time, sir."

"Well, Lieutenant Cecil Conrad of the Royal Navy, I happen to know that you conceived a great plot to enter our lines as a spy, for you were arrested as a rebel spy, tried by a mock court-martial and sentenced to death upon the yard-arm."

"But you escaped, of course by the plan agreed upon, and now come into the patriot lines, pretending to be an American anxious to serve his country, while you lead a force into a trap, and at the same time gain important information for our foes."

"These papers were received only this afternoon, from my spy in Boston, and give your whole history and daring plot, so you see, sir, you are known, and this time there will be no mock trial or escape for you from the gallows, for the punishment of a spy is to hang him for his crimes."

"Ho, without there!"

"Yes, sir," and an orderly appeared.

"Have a guard come here for this man, put him in irons and confine him in the guard-house until further instructions."

CHAPTER XV. THE BRITISH SPY.

THE news flew like wildfire around the American camps that a British spy had been captured.

It was said that he was an English naval officer, who had volunteered to act as a spy, and had boldly entered the American lines and had offered his services to General Arno with the intention of leading the patriot forces into a trap.

There was intense bitterness felt against him, naturally, and many walked by the guard-house to get a glimpse of the daring man who had entered the patriot lines.

They beheld standing by the window, gazing out upon the American camp with seeming interest, a tall, splendidly-formed man, with broad, massive shoulders, and an erect and military air.

He was dressed in sailor garb, that of a common seaman, and wore a jaunty tarpaulin upon his finely shaped and poised head.

His face was bronzed deeply by exposure, but his features were perfect, and dark-brown curls clustered about his neck and temples.

Certainly he was a splendid specimen of manhood, and his bold, fearless and resolute face showed no sign of anxiety at his fate, which he must know could only be death.

In fact, as several officers stood gazing at him they saw him actually smile at the movements of an awkward squad which a grizzly sergeant was drilling in front of the guard-house.

"He certainly looks like a man devoid of fear," said one officer.

"Yes, and it is a pity to see such a man die on the gallows," another rejoined.

Then as they paused they caught the eye of the prisoner, and involuntarily saluted.

The salute was promptly returned, and as the three officers passed on, Cecil Conrad muttered:

"That was kind of them, and they can hardly believe me so black as I am painted."

Then, turning from his reviewing the awkward squad, he took a seat near the window, and the act revealed that his ankles were manacled and chained to a ring in the floor.

"Well, what a career has been mine," he mused, bitterly.

"I entered the service for the king before any shot had been fired to usher in this war, and because I, but a poor, humble coaster, had the ambition to accept the honor I had won, and as an officer in the Royal Navy, I felt that I could learn much that would be useful to me in the service of my country, should war actually come."

"It came sooner than I expected, and the first blow of the patriots to shake off the royal yoke found me a king's officer, and after my resignation, how quickly my downfall followed, for I was suspected, accused of treachery, and that mock trial, as General Arno was pleased to call it, sentenced me to death."

"I escaped, and how gladly did I come here to offer my services to my country."

"But, alas! some foe has already been here with accusations, and I am suspected by those I came to serve, arrested, and accused of being a British spy, and unless I can get aid, proof that I am not one, or can escape, I will be hanged by my own people—no less cruel I find them, and unjust than the British."

"But who is my foe?"

"What spy of the patriots is it in Boston who has sent this news abroad of me?"

"I cannot tell—but it is some one who wishes me well out of the way; yes, and it seems from the present gloomy prospect, is more than likely to succeed."

"Well, I must bear my fate like a man, be it what it may; but, oh! how bitter it will be to those whom I love in the dear old home!"

"Old home? Alas, it is a ruin, and I have no home; yes, and no country, too, it seems, for both the British and the Americans seek my life," and with a longing, wistful look in his eyes, the young sailor turned his gaze out upon the camp once more, to suddenly start as his eyes fell upon a face and form familiar to him.

"That man here in the American camp?"

"I thought that he had gone to England."

"What does it mean?"

The man in question was a tall, slenderly-formed person, with the air of a deacon, for he was dressed in black and wore a clerical-looking hat.

His face was clean-shaven, and one that had not, to a close observer, the stamp of benignity and goodness upon it that the man himself could desire, for there was a hard, cruel, sinister look in his eyes and upon his thin lips that a reader of human nature would at once feel was dangerous and treacherous.

He was making his way toward the quarters of General Arno, and an officer was with him.

"Merchant Sharp Wethervane! What can he, a Tory, want here?" repeated the prisoner, as he kept his eyes upon the receding form of the man whom he had recognized.

"He is revengeful toward me, for he never forgave my mother for refusing to become his wife, and he did all he could to have me hanged, and brought false charges against me to Admiral Chauncey, and, but for Lord Nevil Norcross, he would have had me tried upon a score of crimes he had his hirelings swear I was guilty of."

"Ah! can he be the spy in the British lines that warned General Arno against me?"

"If so, I'll have to hang, that is certain, for who can save me here? What friend have I among those I came to serve?"

"Not one."

Still at the window, and watching the retreating form of the Boston merchant, Cecil Conrad saw him pass the sentinel and enter the quarters of the general.

Soon after, a sergeant and four men came toward the prison, halted, and the order came:

"Prisoner, you are to go with me to headquarters."

"I am ready, sergeant, as soon as you remove my manacles so that I can walk."

"I am to remove them from your ankles, sir, but to put irons upon your wrists."

"Such are my orders, sir."

"Obey them then," was the cool reply.

"You are cool about it, sir."

"If what cannot be cured, sergeant, must be endured," was the answer with a smile, and placing himself between the guards the young sailor moved out of the prison.

His martial bearing, firm step and fearless face riveted many an eye, and a number of compliments about his pluck were bestowed upon him as he passed along.

General Arno was in his quarters; and with him was the merchant, who had whispered as the sailor entered.

"See how he will cringe when he recognizes me, general."

With a bow the prisoner faced the general, and then he let his eyes rest upon the face of Sharp Wethervane with a cool stare which merged into a look of such utter contempt that the merchant's face colored angrily.

"Prisoner, I have a few words to say to you."

"Sergeant, you and your men can retire."

The soldiers departed, and the general continued:

"I have sent you to prison to be tried as a British spy, and a court will at once sit upon your case, for there are men in this land who will quickly profit by your fate and change their

methods—I refer to Americans who are aiding our enemies.

"But it is in your power to save yourself from trial, yes, to save your life, for it can but end one way."

"What is expected of me, General Arno?"

"I have proof that you are an English officer, who underwent a mock trial simply to aid you in your plot to enter our lines as a spy."

"Now I know that you are an American, in humble circumstances, and I am willing to give you a chance to redeem yourself, a chance for your life."

"What am I to do, General Arno?"

"To guide a force against the fort you spoke of; and the cruiser, or cruisers lying in Elm Haven."

"Knowing of your capture, for I have taken occasion to let it be known in the British lines, your friends will not expect a secret attack, and you can readily place a land force in position to attack the fort, and, flanking Elm Haven, reach the shore of the harbor with a larger force still, and, in boats, board and carry the two cruisers now there."

"You are to be the guide, and when the trap is ready to spring upon them, you will be taken to the rear and guarded to see if you have not betrayed my men."

"If so, you will be hanged then and there; but if you have been true, I shall give you your freedom and a pass back to your lines, unless you desire to join our ranks, in which case I will secure you a position as first officer on board of an American privateer."

"Now, what do you say, Mr. Conrad?"

"That I scorn your offer as one unworthy of a man who holds the rank you do," was the stern and cutting response of the young sailor, and the words brought the general to his feet in anger.

CHAPTER XVI.

HELD FOR TRIAL.

"Do you dare insult me, sir?" roared General Arno, his face flushed with anger at the words of the young sailor.

"Pardon me, sir, but did not you fling an insult into the face of a man in irons, expecting me, were I a British officer, to betray my people to save my life, while as an American who came to offer his sword in your aid, you accuse me of being a spy, come to play a treacherous part."

"I think, General Arno, that, whatever you may believe me to be, you wholly misunderstand me, sir."

General Arno resumed his seat, evidently impressed by the words and manner of the prisoner.

But he asked:

"Do you refuse to accept your life upon the terms I offer?"

"I came here, sir, to ask you to allow me to lead a force against the fort at Elm Haven, and the schooner-of-war at anchor in the harbor."

"I escaped from the cruiser two nights ago, and did not know that she was to be reinforced, or another vessel sent there, nor that the fort was to be more heavily garrisoned."

"All I intended to ask was that not an American soldier was to be allowed to enter the home of Sir George Harwood, and no more."

"You accused me of being a British officer, come as a spy into your lines, and now, still believing me so to be, you offer me my life if I will guide a force against the fort and the two vessels."

"And you answer that you will not?"

"Emphatically I answer no!"

"Then you must face the alternative, sir."

"I shall not flinch from it, General Arno."

"Now, sir, tell me if you know this gentleman?" and the general turned toward Merchant Wethervane.

"What gentleman, sir?"

There was no misunderstanding the words or look, for they were directly flung at the merchant.

"Mr. Wethervane, here, sir," and the general could hardly repress a smile at the fury of the merchant.

"I know Mr. Sharp Wethervane, sir, a merchant of Boston, and whom the British supposed to be a Tory, but who, it seems, must be your spy in the city, as he was my accuser when I was tried as a patriot spy before a court-martial of English officers."

"Yes, general, I knew the young man's career well, and his antecedents also, and I was called upon to give certain testimony, which I did; but as I told you, I was in a position to know that the trial, though on the surface apparently real, was at the bottom a mockery and so I informed you of the truth of the affair."

"Perhaps, however, it was not wise for me to be seen here by this man as your friend, for he may report that—"

"Rest at ease on that score, Mr. Wethervane, for this gentleman, I pledge you, will be in no position to make reports that can harm you, so that your good work can go on."

"Prisoner, you have refused my offer, and so there is but one thing for me to do."

"And that is, General Arno, to order me out to be shot," was the cool assumption.

"No, a spy has not that honor allowed him, but is hanged."

"It is death all the same, sir, come in what form it may; but I would ask if I will be allowed to write a letter to my mother?"

"You are too fast, sir, for you will be tried before you are hanged, and I will order the court-martial for three days hence, and they will decide your fate."

"Orderly, send the sergeant here for his prisoner."

The orderly obeyed, and with a bow to the general and an unfathomable look at Sharp Wethervane that he never forgot, Cecil Conrad turned and marched away between his guards.

Back to his prison he went, a small room in a deserted house, and as the manacles were placed upon his ankles the guard turned away when Cecil Conrad said politely:

"Pardon me, sergeant, but you are forgetting to free my hands."

"I am sorry, sir, but my orders were to leave you in double irons."

"Very well, the inconvenience is very little more—good-night, sergeant."

As though he was saluting the general the seagull saluted the prisoner, while he said to the sentinel on duty at the prison:

"That's the gamest man I ever met, and I wish we had him in the patriot army; but, poor fellow, he is as certain to die as we are to be free from England's king."

"Yes, sergeant, they'll make an example of him sure," the sentinel replied as he continued his monotonous beat to and fro.

The sun was just setting, and its light cast a rosy hue upon the face of the prisoner, which ill accorded with the look of bitterness resting there when the sergeant had left him alone.

"Ah me! this is indeed hard, for both the British and the Americans thirst for my blood."

"I know now that Wethervane is my foe and, fearing I might escape he sent dispatches on ahead of me, so that my death, if I die, will be his work."

"This is his revenge against my poor mother for having discarded him."

"My God! had she become the wife of such a man, had such a creature been my father!" and the prisoner shuddered at the thought.

Then he continued his musing after a pause.

"Now Wethervane is an American spy; but is he honest, for is he not in reality a British spy?"

"I know that Lord Nevil Norcross had some deep hold upon him to force him to withdraw his charges against me, and it was said that he and Admiral Chauncey had a quarrel, so that after all this spying work for the Americans may be his revenge upon them."

"No one in the British lines suspects him, that is true, and his business calls him into the country, so that if he is really true to the Americans he can serve them well."

"But if he is false to them and true to the British he can do them immeasurable harm."

"He is doubtless determined to save his riches, by being the real friend of one side and pretended friend of the other."

"I wish I could warn General Arno and tell him what the real character of the man is."

"Bah! I warn him! Why, what would he heed a warning from me, whom he believes to be also a spy; yes, I will do him that credit to say that he is in earnest in his condemnation of me."

"It is getting dark, and so a third night settles down upon my imprisonment in the camp of those whom I came to serve."

"My lot is a hard one; but I'll meet it as becomes a man, and will show no coward fear of my fate, though God knows I would I could die upon the field of battle, or upon the deck of some good ship fighting for the cause of the Colonies."

CHAPTER XVII.

FRIENDS AMONG FOES.

THE morning after the return of the Sea Foe, from her fruitless double chase of the surf-skiff and the buccaneer brig Blue Wing, there was a surprise for those not in the secret, for a small brig-of-war, attended by an armed schooner of seventy tons, hove in sight of Elm Haven and fired a gun for a pilot to come out to them.

Captain Burnett recognized both vessels as English craft which he had left in Boston, and he at once sent a pilot off to bring them in.

When the anchors were let go the two commanders of the strangers went on board the Sea Foe, and reported to Captain Burnett as having been ordered so to do by Admiral Chauncey, and the three officers were then rowed ashore, to have an interview with their chief, who was still the guest of Sir George Harwood.

They found the admiral on the piazza, with Sir George and a number of officers who had just arrived by land, and to his surprise and chagrin, Captain Burnett learned that the fort on the hill above the mansion was to be enlarged and more strongly fortified, for a force of two infantry regiments and a battalion of hussars had just arrived from Boston, and those, with the light and heavy batteries, and the three vessels-of-war, would make Elm Haven a very formidable station.

"Yes, and bring a score more officers to make love to Lady Lucille," was what Captain Burnett thought, and the thought greatly displeased him.

Then he regretted another thing, too, for he was anxious to have Sir George depart, so that he could the better make love to his daughter; but instead, Sir George was to be placed in command of the garrison, the fort of heavy guns, going up to command the haven, and the vessels in the little harbor, while his headquarters were to be in his own house.

The fort had been named in honor of the general's daughter, "Fort Lucille," and Major Paul Pearley would take the field for more active service, at the head of his flying squadron of hussars, while Lord Nevil Norcross would command the fortress.

One vessel-of-war was expected to be constantly in the haven, while the other two were to cruise up and down the coast, in search of an enemy.

With such a dashing officer as Major Pearley on the outposts, it was not thought possible that the Americans could surprise the fort, and if driven back upon it the hussars would have an able support in the infantry and artillery, while the vessels' crews would be a strong reserve.

Such were the arrangements which the admiral and Sir George had decided upon, and up to the time of the arrival of the troops and vessels no one had suspected it, outside of Lord Nevil and Major Pearley.

The infantry were soon in their camps, and works being thrown up and guns mounted, and the admiral was preparing to return to his headquarters in Boston, when dispatches came to him by courier just as he was rising from his dinner.

Sir George, Lord Nevil, Judge Hazel, his wife, and Lady Lucille were present, and the old admiral had read but a few lines, when he burst forth with some expression that very closely resembled an oath.

Feeling that an explanation was needed, he said:

"Well, by the beard of old Neptune, but this is an odd affair!"

"What is it, my lord?" asked the general, who saw that the admiral was excited.

"Why, our rebel spy was not dashed to pieces in the breakers, as Captain Burnett thought, but escaped to the rebel lines, and reported for duty to that arch-traitor, Arno, who commands the Americans' advance, and he was at once accused of being a British officer, entering the lines as a spy, and he'll be hanged as sure as I am a subject of Great Britain's king."

The news was startling, indeed, and Lady Lucille walked over to the window and looked out upon the lawn, while Lord Nevil gave her a quick, searching look.

Then Lord Chauncey continued:

"The rebels say, so my information states, that they not only accused the man of being a spy, but claim that our trial of him was a mock one, gotten up to give him the better chance to gain information, and that he was allowed to escape and reach their lines."

"Well, well, he has done so, and they'll hang him, Sir George—hang him as we would have done."

"You will certainly, my lord, send word to the rebel general that such is not the case," said Lord Nevil, earnestly.

"Why should such a thing be done, Norcross?" quickly asked Sir George.

"Why, sir, that he should not be innocently put to death, for we know that he did not enter the American lines as a British spy, and more, that his trial was not a mock one."

"We accused him of being a rebel spy, and after having had to face death among us, I think it but justice, as Englishmen, that we try to save him when he is accused wrongfully by those whom he went to serve."

Lord Nevil spoke with unusual warmth, and Lady Lucille turned and gave him a quick glance of gratitude.

"You argue well, my lord," said Admiral Chauncey, who was wont, as was Sir George, to yield a great deal of license to the king's favorite, and especially when he, the admiral, owed Lord Nevil considerable money borrowed:

"You argue well, but it could do no good to send word to the rebels, as they would say that of course we were simply trying to save his life."

"No, we sentenced him to death and he escaped, and having gone among the rebels he must accept his fate, that is all," and the admiral's manner showed that he wished the subject to drop and he turned to his other dispatches.

Soon after Major Pearley entered the room, having just returned from a dash with his hussars into the patriot lines.

"I have to report, General Harwood," he said, turning to his new commander. "That we captured a dozen prisoners after a hot brush with the enemy, and they made known to me that Conrad, the prisoner who escaped from us, is now held in the camp of General Arno, and under the charge of an English officer who entered the American lines as a spy."

"They state that he will be surely put to death, and I would ask leave to go under flag of

truce to the rebel general and make known the true situation of the case?"

"It shows a good heart in you, Major Pearley, but we have already had the same news through dispatches to Admiral Chauncey, and have decided that we have nothing to do with the rebel sailor Conrad, more than to recapture him in our power to do so," said the general dryly.

"But surely, sir, this man must not hang under false pretenses," almost indignantly said Major Pearley.

"He was found guilty of being a spy in our lines, and escaped from us, so that if the rebels hang him why that will simply be their punishing him for us."

"This is hardly a just way of looking at it, Sir George," and the young major would have said more had he not caught a warning look from Lady Lucille, who soon after left the room.

Lord Nevil followed with Major Pearley, and they found her out upon the cliff, and certainly saw a signal for them to approach her.

"My Lord Norcross, and you, Major Pearley, I thank for your efforts to save that unfortunate sailor, Conrad; but it seems that both my father and the admiral are determined to keep hands off and let him meet an unjust and awful death."

"They certainly are so determined, Lady Lucille, and yet did they interfere I dread it would be useless, though the effort might be made," Lord Nevil responded.

"Yes, they should try, and then if they failed they would feel that they had done their duty; but what a misfortune for poor Conrad to be called a spy by both sides."

"He is unfortunate, indeed, Major Pearley; but can we not think of some way to save him, for we three are his friends, I know," and Lady Lucille turned her glorious eyes first upon one and then the other of the officers.

"If money would buy him off I would gladly give it, and yet I can see no way to aid him," Lord Nevil said thoughtfully.

"I will think it over and at least make the effort," Major Pearley rejoined, while Lady Lucille added:

"And I will also see if I cannot do something to help him out, if I only inform his mother of his danger, for somehow I have hope in that quarter."

"And I have also after what I have seen done," Lord Neville remarked, and then Lucille asked:

"I suppose it is safe, Major Pearley, with your scouts out, for me to take a gallop, for the sun is yet an hour high."

"Oh, yes, but let either Norcross or myself accompany you, Lady Lucille."

"No, for I do not wish to lead either of you into a scrape, so will go alone; but I hope to see you both to-night to tea," and Lady Lucille walked away toward the mansion, while the two British officers went on their way to the fort, trying to plot meanwhile some means of saving Cecil Conrad from the fate that threatened him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A FAIR ALLY.

MRS. CONRAD'S new home was finished, for it was but a one-story affair of five rooms, and not very pretentious.

The villagers had worked rapidly and well, and many hands made quick work, while they would accept no money for their services.

Where they had doubted the loyalty of Cecil Conrad to the patriots, when they saw that he was to have been hanged for his being suspected of treachery to the British, they had at once become his admirers, and gladly lent a hand to rebuild his mother's home.

So her goods and chattels were moved in, and she was made at least comfortable once more, though around her were the ruins of her old home.

And Congo and Kaloo were also content, and life was expected to jog along as before.

But the poor mother was somewhat startled the day of her moving into her home to see Lady Lucille ride up.

She at once went to her and heard the sad story of her son's being believed to be a British spy.

"Both Lord Norcross and Major Pearley are going to do all they can to save him, but this must be a secret, you know, and I will do the same, good Mrs. Conrad, so cheer up, for I never saw you so cast down before."

"No, I am almost prostrated, my child."

"Yet you were so brave when he was under sentence of death in our lines."

"Ah, I relied upon one to save him then who can now do nothing, alas!"

"You refer to the one who did save him; to—"

But Lady Lucille stopped as she saw the woman start, and her paleness increase to lividness.

"I refer to one who can now do nothing for him," she said, sadly.

"Well, do not despair, for he has friends here among his foes who will not desert him."

"God bless your noble heart, Lady Lucille, is a mother's prayer, for you are so true, so good."

"And to think that my poor boy was so full of hope that he might win a name that I would be proud of, and glad, indeed, to risk his life in defense of his country."

"And so it is that his country repays him," and the last words were spoken almost fiercely.

After a few more words with the almost heart-broken and crushed woman, Lady Lucille started for home, riding rapidly, for night was coming on.

As she sprung from her horse before the door she seemed to have decided upon some course, for she said decidedly:

"I will do it!"

That night she was even more gay and brilliant than ever, and when Lord Norcross and Major Pearley came in later, they were surprised to see her in so joyous a mood.

"Have you heard good news?" asked Lord Nevil, at the first opportunity.

"Nothing, and his poor mother is completely broken down, for in this case she says she is helpless, for one she depended upon to aid him here can do nothing now that he is in the hands of the Americans."

"That ghost, I'll wager high on it," muttered Lord Nevil.

Then Major Pearley came up and said:

"I have formed a plan, Lady Lucille, and Norcross is to help me carry it out; but I do not wish to hold out hopes of its success."

"Still we will do our best to aid him."

"I thank you both," said Lucille, softly, and soon after, when the guests had taken their leave, having bidden the admiral farewell, for he was to sail at dawn for Boston, Lady Lucille sought her father's side and said:

"Father, I have a favor to ask of you?"

"Well, my child."

"You know that I must prepare my fall dresses, and for winter, so I would like to go to Boston for a week, and visit my old school-mate Hortense Gerty, and she will aid me to do my shopping."

"I have no objections, my child, only I cannot go with you; but why not have your aunt as an escort?"

"For the reason that I wish to visit Hortense."

"If you were ready you might go up in the Sea Fox, under the care of the admiral."

"I prefer to go by stage, sir, and more, I do not wish to be bothered by visitors while in the city, and shall not let the admiral know that I am there, or any of my friends in fact."

"As you deem best, Lucille," was the answer, and Sir George kissed his daughter good-night, and after bidding farewell to the admiral, who in vain tried to see her alone, she retired to her room to prepare for her journey.

Bright and early the next morning she was up and ready, and the family carriage took her to the highway where she could meet the stage. Judge Hazel and his wife accompanied her that far.

The stage came along on time, and without accident she arrived at the home of her friend, whose father was a rich shipping merchant of Boston.

"Oh, Lucille, how good of you to come just now, for papa is away for a few weeks in New York, and I am all alone," was the greeting she received.

"And I am here to make you my *confidante*, Hortense, and to ask your aid in a most serious affair," was the reply, and in open-eyed wonder the beautiful Hortense listened to the whole story of Lady Lucille's first acquaintance with the young sailor and the subsequent happenings.

"Lucille, it looks like a desperate case; but I am with you heart and soul to save that splendid man," Hortense said earnestly, when she had heard all, and tears of sympathy dimmed her beautiful blue eyes.

"But what can we two poor girls do to save him?" she asked deprecatingly.

"I will tell you that it is my intention to take a carriage and drive straight to the rebel lines, and tell General Arno the truth, leaving it to his sense of justice to set him free."

"You are so brave, Lucille; but I will accompany you, and we will go in my own carriage, for we must not be known, except to the rebel general, who certainly cannot betray us, while I can certainly trust our coachman, Brass, who was a slave on my mother's plantation in Virginia; but when shall we start?"

"Before dawn so as to reach the rebel lines by noon and return soon after dark."

"Can you get a pass out of the city?"

"Oh, yes, under the pretense of going to papa's farm."

"I will write a note at once to the provost-general."

The note was written, and the response came in the shape of a pass for Miss Hortense Gerty and companion, in her own carriage driven by her negro coachman to go through the British lines upon special business and to return at will.

Brass was then called in and told to have his best horses ready for the jaunt, with feed for the animals, and to carry weapons with him, and a basket of tempting edibles was prepared for repasts upon the journey.

The gray of dawn had not appeared in the eastward when the carriage with its fair in-

mates drove by the sentinels and left the city behind, as it sped at a quick pace along the highway, drawn by a spirited pair of chestnuts, which Brass the coachman was really proud of.

Sooner than they had anticipated they came in sight of the first patriot outpost and were brought to a halt by a sentinel, who in spite of the white flag which Brass waved vigorously, leveled his musket at the heart of the negro.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PLEADERS.

LADY LUCILLE was the spokeswoman, and she at once dismounted from the carriage and advancing toward the sentinel said in her sweetest tone:

"We are but two ladies, and our coachman, so are not dangerous, as you see."

"I am not so sure of that, lady," gallantly said a young officer, raising his hat as he came forward from behind a large rock.

"But may I ask what your wishes are?"

"To see General Arno upon a matter of vast importance, a case of life and death in fact, sir."

"I will escort you into the lines where the officer of the inner guards will hear your case, lady."

"Remember, sir, we enter your lines under a flag of truce, which claims our right to depart at will," cautiously said Lucille.

"Assuredly, lady, and you will find it respected by us, rebels though the king branded us."

The young officer escorted Lady Lucille back to her carriage, and mounting his horse rode on ahead of the vehicle for several miles, when he came to a halt.

Other outposts had been passed, with several small camps, but the presence of the officer caused no delay until they came to the line of sentinels around the main encampment.

Here a message was sent to General Arno, who promptly ordered that the fair visitors should be conducted to his quarters.

Lowering their veils they left Brass to feed his horses and followed the officer to the small house where General Arno had his quarters.

He arose at their entrance, bowed low, an after bidding them be seated, asked politely how he could serve them.

"Both raised their veils, perhaps because each knew the wonderful power of beauty over a man's heart, and the gallant old general was fairly taken aback at the loveliness he beheld."

Lady Lucille then said softly:

"We have come to you, General Arno, to prevent you from doing a wrong, and to tell you just how an injustice had been done an unfortunate young man now a prisoner in your camp."

"We are both of us English women, British subjects, and proud that we are so, and yet we come to you to appeal for an American, one whom you deem a foe, where he is a patriot in your cause against the king."

"Will you hear my story, General Arno?"

"Yes, lady, for you interest me, as English ladies appealing for an American."

"I pray you let me know what you have to say."

Then Lady Lucille, in her sweet, earnest manner, told of Cecil Conrad's career, and how he had tried to leave the king's service by resigning his commission, but had been not only prevented from so doing, but had been brought to trial upon charges that were utterly false against him.

The general seemed much moved, and was about to reply, when an officer came in and said:

"Pardon, general, but bearers of a flag of truce desire to receive an immediate audience with you, sir."

"Admit them," and turning to the two maidens, General Arno continued:

"May I ask you ladies to step into this adjoining room for a few minutes?"

They rose and obeyed, and the general turned to find his staff officer entering with two others, who wore the British uniform.

Both of the strangers bowed, and one said:

"We come, General Arno, under a flag of truce, but must request that our names be kept secret for a purpose which I will explain, if you grant this request."

"Certainly, gentlemen; be seated, please."

"With your word to preserve our *incognito*, General Arno, I beg to introduce my friend as Lord Nevil Norcross, colonel of dragoons in the British Army, and myself as Paul Pearley, major of hussars under the king."

"I have heard of you both, gentlemen, while you, Major Pearley, have given us a number of surprises the past few days."

"To what circumstances am I indebted for the honor of this visit?"

"To save the life of our friend, sir, though he is an American and a patriot."

"Did it become known that we had entered your lines under a flag of truce, without permission from headquarters, it will go hard with us; but taking advantage of commanding opposite your outposts, I came with Lord Nevil upon our own responsibility to plead for a man now falsely accused and a prisoner in your hands, when

he came as a patriot to cast his lot with your cause."

"Almost her words," muttered the general, and he asked:

"Who is this person, sir, for whom you plead?"

"His name is Cecil Conrad, sir, and his history is a strange one; but he is not guilty, as I will pledge my honor as a soldier, while Lord Nevil here was his advocate in the trial which ended in his being sentenced to the yard-arm for being a rebel spy."

"This is so, Lord Nevil, that the trial was no mock one?"

"Upon my honor, sir, as a British officer it was only too real, mock only in its being a foregone conclusion from the first, among the lot of young toady officers who condemned him, that to please their superiors they were to find him guilty," replied Lord Nevil earnestly, and the answer came almost violently from the lips of General Arno:

"My God, gentlemen! had I only known this two days ago."

"Good God! are we too late?"

"Yes, Lord Nevil, for the poor fellow had such seeming proof against him that he was found guilty almost immediately, and his sentence was to be hanged, and he was sent back at dawn this morning to the army under the commander-in-chief, to be hanged this very afternoon—it is just noon now."

Had General Arno held any doubt before of the sincerity of the two officers, he certainly would have dismissed it when he saw how hard the blow fell upon them.

"General Arno, they have murdered an innocent man, one whom I loved as I would my own brother," said Lord Nevil.

"My God, what a mistake of alleged justice and how cruel war is," Paul Pearley said.

General Arno was also deeply moved, for he remembered the splendid looking man, and how he had, believing him guilty, made no effort to save him.

"Gentlemen, Heaven knows I regret this most unfortunate—murder, for so I now believe it to have been, in the light of what you have told me, and what I have but just now heard from another source.

"It cannot be possible that the execution was delayed, yet it may have been, through some accident or other cause, and I will dispatch a courier at once to the scene, and if not too late the whole facts, making your names known only to the commander-in-chief, shall be placed in such a light as to gain an immediate pardon for that unfortunate man.

"Orderly!"

An orderly appeared and the general hastily wrote a note and ordered it sent with all haste to the commander-in-chief, and it was a request to stay the execution of Cecil Conrad if by any chance it had not already occurred.

"Tell the courier to spare not self or horse, but to go with the speed of the wind," was the order, and turning to his visitors, he said:

"God grant he be not too late."

"I heartily say amen, General Arno; but we must now take our departure, and we only wish that we had been able to arrive on yesterday."

"And we thank you, sir, for your kindness," and with this Lord Nevil led the way from the room, while an officer, summoned by the general, escorted them to their horses, and beyond the lines.

After their departure General Arno stood for a minute in deep thought, like a man who had some painful duty to perform and shrunk from it.

But at last he nerved himself to it and stepping to the door of the adjoining room knocked gently.

Lady Lucille opened it, and the general said quietly:

"Now, young ladies, I have something to tell you that I was about to make known when those visitors arrived."

CHAPTER XX.

THE ESCAPE.

It was a strange circumstance, a coincidence, thought General Arno, that four persons should arrive almost at the same time to beg for the life of the young American sailor, to prove to him that he was unjustly condemned.

That two, the maidens had come from Boston, and the others, officers of high rank, had risked their commissions and came from on the coast, was proof that the American had British friends of influence.

Lady Lucille's clear, earnest story had carried truth with it.

She had made known her rank and that she was the daughter of General Sir George Harwood, and had told how the gallant young sailor, from boyhood to manhood, had proven a life-saver, and had from ambition alone accepted the commission in the king's navy which he had so well earned.

She told of his widowed mother, and General Arno listened and was convinced that the American had been maligned, had been falsely accused.

His real emotion was what neither maiden could then understand, and he was pre-

paring to make known that their pleading came too late when the two British officers were announced.

Then he heard their story of Cecil Conrad's life, and that he was heart and soul an American, that he had been tried to be found guilty, and would have been hanged had he not escaped.

General Arno no longer doubted, and he at once made known the sad news that the American had been tried by an American court-martial, and upon the evidence furnished had been found guilty and sentenced to be hanged as a spy.

Not a hint did he give to the officers of the presence of the ladies, and not a hint would he give to them that Lady Lucille and Hortense Gerty were near.

He would betray the confidence of neither.

When Lady Lucille and Hortense Gerty re-entered the room, they saw from the serious face of the general that he had sad news for them, and they at once supposed that he had decided to deny their appeal.

"Ladies, I regret exceedingly to tell you that I fear your pleading comes too late, though I dispatched a courier after you left the room, with all haste to army headquarters, to stay the execution of the American sailor, and, if he arrives in time, it will be done.

"As a British court-martial found Conrad guilty of being a spy, upon the evidence offered, so also did a court of American officers also find that upon evidence offered he was a British spy."

"Then he has been already tried?" asked Hortense, in a low tone.

"He has been, yes."

"And sentenced?" Lady Lucille said.

"Yes."

"To death?"

"Yes, and the hour was appointed, but, as I said, I hope the courier may arrive in time, and if so, I will pledge you my word to set the young man free, for your story carried conviction of truth with it, and I only regret your visit was not sooner.

"May I ask you if I can have lunch prepared for you?"

This offer was declined, and thanking the general, and hoping for the best, for he had not told them the hour of execution had passed, they took their departure, greatly pleased with the "rebel general," and his treatment of them.

The same officer who had escorted them there saw them on their way out of the lines, and they were nearing the last British outpost, when a horseman was seen dashing after them with all speed.

What could it mean, they wondered, as the officer who acted as their escort ordered Brass to come to a halt.

"What if we should be made prisoners, Lu?" said Hortense, fearing such a catastrophe.

"We are still under flag of truce protection, Hortense, so that cannot be," replied Lucille, who was thoroughly familiar with the rules of war.

The man proved to be a courier, and drawing rein, handed the young officer a sealed envelope.

It was addressed simply:

"TO THE LADIES UNDER FLAG OF TRUCE."

To the last the patriot general would not betray them even to the officer who was their escort.

Breaking the seal Lady Lucille read, written in a bold hand, yet evidently with haste:

"MESAÑES:—"

"I have the pleasure to report that a courier just arrived with the tidings that the prisoner, on his way to execution, made his escape, and is beyond chance of capture.

"With respect,

"Your obedient servant,

"ARNO."

"Thank God!" ejaculated Hortense, as fervently as though she had known the young sailor intimately.

"I had that hope all the time, for, Hortense, Cecil Conrad was not born to be hanged," and, as she spoke, Lady Lucille turned to the courier and said:

"Say to General Arno, please, that we appreciate fully his extreme kindness."

"Yes, lady," and with a bow the courier dashed away and the vehicle moved on once more.

The last outpost was passed, and the young officer rode on for some distance with the carriage until he felt that he was going too far into danger, so said:

"I will say farewell to you, ladies, and wish you a safe journey home."

"We thank you, sir, for your kindness to us, and wish you personally every success in life," and Lady Lucille held forth her hand.

The soldier's face flushed with pleasure as he took it, and Hortense likewise extended her hand with a sweet smile and pleasant:

"Good-by, Sir Rebel, for I do not know your other name."

"Marion Mayhew, lady, captain of the Rebel Ranger Hussars," was the smiling response.

"I shall watch the lists of prisoners to see if you are among them, and if so, will try and serve you."

"See the lists of killed also, lady, for a sol-

dier's life is short—farewell," and raising his hat the dashing young hussar captain rode away.

"Rebels are not so bad after all, are they, Lu?" said Hortense, as they drove on again.

"Not so bad, Hortense, I assure you—Marion Mayhew of the Ranger Hussars—we must look for that name."

"I certainly shall, for I am half in love with the handsome fellow; but are we not in good time, for we'll enter the city soon after night-fall?"

"Yes, and just to think how much I owe to you, and your goodness, and Brass shall not be forgotten, I assure you."

"He is faithful indeed, and wild horses could not drag our secret from him; but how fortunate it is that your hero has escaped."

"Yes, fortunate indeed; but how he did so is a mystery."

"Yes, he appears to be a man of mystery, especially when ghosts befriend him."

"Wonder if it was a ghost that helped him this time Lu?"

"I do not know who could have helped him—ah! what is it, Brass?"

Brass had come to a halt, and no wonder, for two horsemen had ridden into the highway before the carriage and leveled their huge pistols, at the same time ordering the negro to draw rein.

"Soldiers, missy," said Brass, and leaning from the window Lady Lucille saw the cause of the sudden halt.

CHAPTER XXI.

STRANGELY MET.

THE two horsemen were British soldiers, hussars, and they were determined looking fellows who had the appearance of men who would do their duty.

"Who are you, where from and where going?" asked one of the soldiers, bowing politely, yet speaking firmly as he rode up to the carriage window.

"We are English ladies who went to the American lines to plead for a prisoner, and are returning to Boston," replied Lady Lucille.

"Our orders are to permit no one to pass, lady, and we shall have to send you under guard to headquarters."

"To Boston, you mean?"

"No, lady, we have a nearer headquarters now."

"Who is in command?"

"General Sir George Harwood, lady."

Both of the maidens started.

To be taken before Sir George Harwood would never do.

"Soldiers, we have a pass here from General Garland, the British commander, to go in and out of the lines at will, and you must respect it."

Lady Lucille handed over the pass as she spoke, and the soldier glanced at it.

"This is all right for the district under General Garland's command, lady, but not for that of Sir George Harwood, and it is our duty to take you to his quarters, which though a long ride from here we cannot help doing our duty."

The maidens were almost in despair, and Lady Lucille and Hortense, too, tried all the arguments they could think of upon the soldier, but to no avail.

They appealed to the other man, but he too was obdurate.

"Come, man, follow me, and you, Belt, keep behind the carriage," said the soldier, who wore a corporal's stripes.

Brass looked daggers at them, and had he the power just then, the king would have been minus two soldiers.

When all arguments failed and the carriage moved on, the corporal in advance, the soldier behind, Lady Lucille called the former to the window and said:

"See here, my man, we do not care to go to General Harwood's quarters, and we are anxious to reach Boston at an early hour, so as you will do no harm in allowing us to go, and are doubtless in needy circumstances, I do not mind giving you fifty pounds for you to share with your comrade, and General Garland's pass will be your basis of permitting us to go on our way."

"I am sorry, lady, to refuse you, and to lose the money, for I have a wife and children who need it sadly, and yet no amount would tempt me to disgrace myself as a British soldier by taking a bribe."

"Your offering money shows that there is something wrong, and I shall certainly take you to Sir George Harwood, and for your own sakes I hope all is right with you."

"That soldier is a true man," said Lady Lucille, as she leaned back in the carriage.

"Yes, and he is doing only his duty; but we are in a fix, Lu."

"We certainly are; but we must think of some way to extricate ourselves—Ah! we are again at a standstill."

"What is this, corporal?" asked a stern voice, and an officer dashed up, followed by a companion.

"Two ladies, sir, that were out of the rebel lines and going toward Boston, sir; but I was taking them to General Harwood."

"You were doing your duty, corporal— Ah!" and the officer bent low in his saddle as his eyes fell upon the face of Lady Lucille.

"Major Pearley! Sh! do not speak my name here, and permit me to present you to my esteemed friend, Miss Hortense Gerty, of whom you have often heard me speak."

The major sprung from his horse, and approaching the carriage opened the door, while he bowed to Hortense and said:

"Alas, lady, you, like ourselves were too late, for here is Lord Nevil."

"Lord Nevil here? Too late; what can you mean?"

Simply that you boldly entered the rebel lines, to plead with General Arno, for both Norcross and myself did the same, and we learned that the general was engaged with two ladies who had arrived from Boston, and now the secret is out; but poor Conrad we were too late to save."

"I have good news for you, Major Pearley, for a courier overtook us as we left the rebel lines, for there is no denying to you now our secret—see this letter."

"By— I beg pardon, but I am so glad at this news I nearly was guilty of profanity in your presence—may I call Norcross, for we have a secret to keep, also, so will hold ours against yours, as it would not look well for British officers, without orders, going under a truce flag into the rebel lines; but we did it to try and save poor Conrad."

"Here, Norcross, I have some friends I would introduce you to."

Lord Nevil had been seated upon his horse some distance apart, but now dismounted and approached the carriage.

His surprise and pleasure may be imagined when he confronted the beautiful face of Lady Lucille, and the equally as lovely countenance of Hortense Gerty.

A few words told the story, and Major Pearley said:

"We were returning slowly, visiting our outposts, and heard the rumble of wheels, so came in this direction to find the best capture of the season; but you must not delay on the road, and as it is in our power to escort you a few miles, we will do so, and, if invited, accept a seat in your carriage, while the soldier leads our horses, for you may be sure we went without our escort."

The invitation was most cordially extended, and the carriage rolled on once more, the corporal in advance and the private soldier following, with the horses of the two officers.

"I wish you to promote that corporal, Major Pearley, for he nobly did his duty, and his companion was equally as true a soldier."

"I shall make him an ordnance sergeant at my quarters, Lady Lucille, and the soldier shall be my orderly, for both places are just now to be filled; but at your command I would make places for them, while, to resist you and Miss Gerty, I really think they should be commissioned—there, I have done, for I know your dislike for compliments; but is it not joyous news about Conrad's escape, and is it not wonderful how he never goes under?"

"No matter what the odds are against him," Lord Nevil said.

"It is wonderful; but he is a very remarkable personage," Lady Lucille remarked, while Hortense said:

"I really hope some day to see this phenomenal young American sailor."

"You will certainly hear of him, Miss Gerty, my word for that, for that man cannot be kept under, and whether he enter the army or the navy of the rebels, we will find that he will win fame for himself," Lord Nevil remarked with considerable enthusiasm over the one whom he had always termed "Lady Lucille's hero."

As there was now no longer danger from scouting patriots, and the line of General Garland's district had been crossed, the two officers took their leave, while Lady Lucille promised to return to Elm Haven soon and bring Hortense with her.

"That means more heart-breaking," said Major Pearley gayly, and the two officers followed by the two soldiers, dashed away delighted with their meeting with the young ladies, who by no means regretted the *contretemps* which had caused them to so strangely meet Major Paul Pearley and Lord Nevil Norcross.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE ROAD-RAIDERS.

"I HOPE no harm will befall them now," said Major Pearley, as he rode on rapidly after leaving the carriage to go on its way.

Lord Nevil was by his side, and the two soldiers followed behind, their authority of course ending when their major came upon the scene, for they belonged to Paul Pearley's hussar squadron.

"What do you fear for them now?" asked Lord Nevil.

"I hope there is nothing to fear, but then you know that there are a lot of harpies, belonging to either side, who are nothing more than road-raiders, and they are so daring that they often go within sight of our camps, avoid-

ing our outposts most skillfully, and these are the men I have come to fear."

"Let us hope that the ladies will escape them, for I now remember what a bad lot they are," said Lord Nevil, and soon after they arrived at an advanced post, and the officer on duty there was ordered to send two more men in the place of the corporal and his comrade, who were told to get their traps and follow on to the hussar headquarters.

It was just dark when the two friends, utterly tired out, arrived at their quarters, and half an hour after the two soldiers arrived.

"Your name is Halpin, corporal?"

"Yes, sir, Henry Halpin, sir," and the corporal had begun to feel uneasy at what he had done.

"You need make no report of the carriage being halted to-day, for I will see to that, and for your proving as true as you did, to not even be won over by beauty or gold, report to the adjutant to-morrow for duty as headquarter ordnance sergeant."

"Oh, Major Pearley, you are too good to me, sir," and the man, who would never have quivered before a foe, felt himself trembling with joy and his eyes fill with tears.

"Sidney Green?"

"Yes, sir," and the private soldier stepped forward.

"I wish to compliment you also upon your behavior to-day, and you can report to-morrow as orderly here at my quarters."

The soldier's straight form bent low in a bow, and he muttered some words of thanks, while Lord Nevil stepped forward, and in his pleasant way, which had made him a general favorite with the army and navy, congratulated them, and handed to each one-half a dozen golden guineas, as he said:

"For nest-eggs to add to."

After a hearty supper, washed down by some delicious wine, the two officers sat smoking together enjoying their rest, and little dreaming what peril had fallen upon the two fair occupants of the carriage wending its way Bostonward.

Brass 'had driven on rapidly, not sparing the chestnuts, who traveled well, for he had heard many a terrible story of these same road-raiders, and felt his responsibility fully.

He had passed several British outposts or scouting parties, with the pass of General Garland, without a word of comment; but when congratulating himself, as the sun was nearing its setting, that all danger was over, two men stepped out into the road before him and leveled their rifles.

"Halt, nigger, or yer soul goes skyward."

Brass did halt, for he saw before him two as villainous looking ruffians as he had ever before beheld.

Then there was another further up the road, mounted, and holding two led horses, while a quick glance behind him revealed the fact that a fourth man, also mounted, was in the rear of the carriage.

The costumes of the men partook of the uniform of the Colonists and British, with some article of civilian apparel also.

Their horses were good animals, but thin, and the saddles and equipments also partook of both armies.

The men were bearded, rough-looking fellows, whom a glance was sufficient to reveal the true character of, or lack of character rather, for they were the vultures that picked from British and American patriot alike, Tory, Whig or Rebel.

"Waal, nagur, what has yer got in the box on wheels a-worth fingerin'?" asked the leader, as he came forward.

"Missy, I guesses we has got some wicked rapsallions to deal with," said Brass, leaning over toward the carriage window, and speaking to Lady Lucille.

Both maidens paled, yet remained calm, and as the leader of the foot-pads came to the door, Lady Lucille said politely:

"You will find this pass from General Garland all right, captain."

The man looked pleased, and took off his hat with an awkward bow.

The "captain" had "caught him" and flattered his vanity.

"It's all right, miss, doubtless, but only General Garland's pass don't go with us patriots," he said.

"Ah! you are of the re— patriot army then?"

"Yes, miss."

"Well, we have just left the quarters of General Arno, captain, and are now returning to Boston."

"It may be as yer say, miss; but our duty is ter demand toll, yer see."

"The Continental Army are poor, and we has ter help 'em along as we can, and so we jist has ter take what cash and jewelry yer ladies has, along with yer horses, for it hain't but a couple o' miles ter walk to ther next British post, whar yer kin git accommodated with critters!"

"You are not patriots, for true soldiers are not robbers," indignantly said Lady Lucille.

"We is patriots when it pays ter be, and Britishers if it pays ter sarve the king, while in

between times we is sarvin' ourselves, miss, and jist now we is on a collectin' tour, so jist hand over yer spare change and jewels."

"I know you now as road-agents, and General Garland will see to it when we report you, that you are driven from these lines."

"Ah, miss, you is Britishers then?"

"Yes."

"You is for the king I take it?"

"We are British subjects."

"Then my duty is plain, for I thought you was American ladies going into Bosting; but that alters the case."

"How so?" asked Hortense with sudden hope.

"Waal, if you is British you is rich and high-toned, and yer kin has ther gold to pay fer your ransom, so our fortin is made, as we'll jist take yer to our camp and hold yer until ther money we axes fer yer is forthcoming."

"Villains! would you do an act so cruel, so lawless?" indignantly cried Lady Lucille, while Brass made a movement as though to resist, but was checked by the man whose rifle covered him with the remark:

"Jist wink yer eyebrow, niggur, and yer die o' bullet-fever."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TELL-TALE VOICE.

It was certainly a critical moment for the two maidens, for they could see that the man was in deadly earnest in his threat.

They had each brought some money with them prepared against accidents, and between them had over a hundred pounds.

Then their gloves shielded from view their jewels, and bracelets, so that altogether the robbers would have a good prize in robbing them.

If they took the horses also, it would be far better for them to walk on under the protection of Brass, than to have to go with the cruel, dangerous miscreants who stood before them.

So Lady Lucille said sternly:

"Now that we know just what you are, I will tell you that we can give you something over a hundred pounds, and jewelry worth twice as much more."

"Take them and let us go on our way."

"Oh, no."

"Then take our horses, also, and we will walk on with our coachman."

"I says no, for wimmen as has ther money you has, and drives in style is able ter pay big for ransom."

"I say, Doc."

"Yas," and the second robber stepped forward.

"We haven't much time ter fool here, so jist git ther horses loose from ther carridge, and the gals kin ride 'em, and ther critters will bring good prices."

"Ther niggur kin go afoot and report thet we has ther leddies, and that the'r friends will git a letter when and how ter pay ther ransom money, and jist how much we is ter git, don't yer see?"

"I sees."

"Well, set ter work with ther horses, and I'll see to ther gals' gittin' ready, and ef they cuts up any, and sings out, why we'll jist tie 'em and gag 'em, that is all, fer I doesn't intend ter lose no fortin from wimmins' screaming, not I."

Lady Lucille and Hortense heard all this, and their faces could not hide longer their sufferings; but the former asked in a quivering voice:

"What is the sum you demand in ransom from us?"

"Five thousand apiece!"

"If you will not take us with you, but will come to this young lady's house to-morrow, at noon, I will pledge my word to pay it to you."

"I doesn't doubt it, but yer'll see I is banged arterwards and the money is gotten back ag'in."

"No, I will pledge my word not to betray you."

"It won't work, miss, and you must do as I says, and quick, too, for I hain't got no time to fool here, whar thar is danger to us. Come, git out o' that kerridge at once."

He held forth his hand to grasp her arm, when Hortense, involuntarily gave a loud shriek, and Lady Lucille cried excitedly:

"Hands off, sir, hands off, I say!"

But the villain unbowed her cry, and the others closed around the carriage quickly, while in their excitement and eagerness at so rich a prize, they failed to observe two horses with riders wheel suddenly at a gallop into the highway from a woodland path.

"Oh, glory hallelujah!" broke in joyous tones from the lips of Brass, and then followed the crack of a pistol, and the miscreant that had hold of Lady Lucille dropped dead in his tracks.

At the same moment the one who had fired the shot spurred his horse over another of the robbers, whose gun, though fired, did no damage, and he was knocked down and trampled under the hoofs of the horse.

The other two robbers had already started in flight, and as he started in pursuit, the one who had so quickly ended the career of the two outlaws, called out:

"Back into your carriage, Lady Lucille, and, coachman, drive on at full speed!"

Then he sped on his way, followed by the one

who had accompanied him, and who was now seen to be a woman.

Lady Lucille had sprung back into the carriage, at the command, while Brass had at once started up his horses at a swift pace, and went rolling along the highway toward Boston.

There was one thing that Lady Lucille noticed, and that was that the rescuers, or rescuer, for the horsewoman had taken no part, save to follow the horseman, did not pursue the outlaws, who had dashed away into a thicket, but instead they had held on their way through the woodland, on a path running almost parallel with the highway which the carriage was following.

But Brass had the chestnuts in a run now, and there was no danger of the two outlaws who had escaped from overtaking the carriage, even had they felt so inclined, and it was more than likely that their only desire then was to escape capture themselves.

The road was not exactly the same which they had followed in going, for at one of the outposts they had been directed to take this one as a few miles nearer; but both maidens remembered that the outlaw leader had spoken of a British guard being stationed about a couple of miles away, where they would have to walk had they taken their horses and held them for ransom.

So they urged Brass on, and soon the flash of a red coat was seen ahead in a piece of woods, and the horses were at once drawn down to a slow trot, while the negro called out:

"Bress de lord, missies, but we is safe now."

The rapid coming of the carriage had been heard by the outpost, and they were mounted and ready to see what it meant, and to the sergeant in charge Lady Lucille at once told what had occurred.

"But who were your rescuers, lady?" asked the sergeant.

Hortense was about to reply, when a warning look from her friend checked her, and Lucille, after an instant of hesitation said:

"Doubtless an English officer out horseback riding with a lady, for so they appeared."

"He was a plucky fellow, miss, to attack four men, and especially such men as those road-raiders are, while from what you tell me I guess it was Devil Dick's band."

"But you are in no more danger now, for troops are frequent from here on, and I'll take my men and go to the spot and bury the bodies, and see if I can track the two who escaped."

"Have no more fear, ladies; night will be on you before you reach town, but never mind that," and the sergeant bowed as the maidens, after warmly thanking him drove on.

On the way to the American lines they had halted twice for rest and lunch by the wayside, but they had had an experience which decided them in going straight on, and in this Brass concurred, for he said the horses had plenty of time to rest after they got home and the hard drive would not hurt them.

When they were once again on their way Lady Lucille turned to her companion, into whose lovely face the flush had not yet returned and said impressively:

"Hortense, you saw my warning look to you?"

"Yes, Lu."

"I'll tell you what it meant, for I did not wish you to describe the man who came to our rescue."

"Yet why, Lu?"

"Hortense, that man was Cecil Conrad."

Hortense Gerty started as though her friend had told her that outlaws were in pursuit of her.

"Nonsense, Lucille," she said with an incredulous smile.

"It is the truth, for you saw that he wore the uniform of a British officer?"

"Yes, of a naval officer."

"Exactly."

"But he had blonde hair and a beard."

"They were false, for I heard his voice and know it too well."

"It was Cecil Conrad, for you know he had escaped, and he is escaping in that disguise."

"It might be so, Lu, but I can hardly think so."

"I'll give you stronger proof, for you know that he called my name."

"Indeed that is so."

"Well, he forgot himself there, and he is just the man to attack such odds as he did."

"He was not following the highway, but bridle-paths through the forests, and you recall that he did not pursue the outlaws, only pretended to do so, and turned off again into the bridle-path."

"Had he been a stranger, or army officer who knew me, he certainly would have come to the carriage and spoken; but he did not do so."

"No, and I now believe you are right, Lucille; but how his voice rung when he sprung to the carriage and ordered Brass to drive on—I even at that moment noticed its splendid ring."

"It was his voice that betrayed him to me, Hortense, and afterthought convinced me that I was right."

"But who was the woman?"

"That I do not know, for her face was veiled."

"Perhaps she was the one who aided his escape."

"Perhaps so, Hortense," was the low reply of Lady Lucille.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SEA SPHINX.

It was nearly midnight when Brass drove the tired chestnuts into the large gateway entering the spacious grounds around Hortense Gerty's elegant home.

The maidens were utterly worn out, and after a hearty supper were glad to retire for the rest they so much needed.

In the morning, after a late breakfast, they talked over the adventures of the day before, and Lady Lucille felt that she had at least done her duty for the man to whom she owed so deep a gratitude, while Hortense, who was of a romantic turn of mind, was now glad, when it was all over that she had gone through so much danger.

Hortense Gerty was one of those bright, lovable little women we now and then meet that are irresistible.

Of a slender form, yet perfect in mold, graceful and sparkling in manner, she had about her a magnetism that was very great, and her golden hair, blue eyes and piquant manner had won many a heart, and burst them too, for thus far Hortense had never met her *beau idéal* of manhood.

She loved Lady Lucille as a sister, and her affection was honestly returned, for the two had been room-mates for several terms at boarding school.

"We must keep our secret, Hortense, and Brass will do the same," said Lucille as they sat together in the library the following morning.

"Yes, and both Major Pearley and Lord Norcross will keep it, I am sure; but the rebel general knows us."

"No fear of General Arno, Hortense; but I could see that he thought one of us was in love with Cecil Conrad, but which one he could not decide."

"I don't know him, you know, Lu," significantly said Hortense, and with a glance of mischief in her eyes.

"Well, wait until you do," was the quiet reply, and Lady Lucille changed the subject to the supposed reason of her coming, to shop.

That day the two friends went shopping, and the next, and when Mr. Gerty returned home at the end of the week, he granted permission for Hortense to return home for a visit.

The two friends returned by the cutter, which had come up for dispatches for the admiral, whom they met upon the street, and Lady Lucille could see that he felt hurt that she had not let him know of her presence in the city.

"Father gave me permission to come on a shopping tour, my lord, and you know at such times ladies are all wrapped up in dress and for once forget their friends."

"But it is very kind of you to permit us to return in the cutter, and I thank you."

"Yes, if it was the Sea Fox I hardly think I would do so, for Burnett is a dangerous fellow; but Jules Girard has been promoted to the command of the cutter Sea Sphinx, and will take the best of care of you both, while, if I can steal away, I may run down for a short visit to Elm Haven before long."

"You know you are always welcome there, admiral, and as Miss Gerty will be my guest we will the better entertain you."

"Dangerous entertainment with two such entertainers, I take it, even for an old sea-dog like myself."

"But I learned that your sailor-hero, the spy, was sentenced to death by the rebels for being a British spy," and the admiral wickedly regarded Lady Lucille, to see just the effect of his words.

"I feared it, sir, and I suppose that will mean his death?" was the perfectly cool response.

"Well, yes, that is what it *would* mean, but for an accident."

"And what is that, sir, if I may ask?"

"He escaped."

"Ah! he is, indeed, fortunate, and I am glad of it," was the equally cool response, and Hortense was mentally in ecstasies over her friend's manner.

"The news of the trial and sentence came to me, through secret sources of communication I have, and then came the report of his escape."

"Then knowing that he was no rebel spy, Admiral Chauncey, I suppose you will remove from him the brand of having been so, also the stigma of outlawry and accept his resignation as a British officer that he may in honor enter the patriot service, for is it not his due?"

"I am now certain, Lady Lucille, that he was a rebel spy, and that Arno merely patched up this trial and sentence to deceive us, for although the sailor is a remarkable man, it is not possible for him, even, to escape from both a British man-of-war and an American army camp, upon the eve of his execution."

"No, he is just what I had him tried for, and is to-day branded as a deserting officer of the royal navy, a spy and a sentenced criminal."

"And by the Americans as a British spy, under death sentence."

"Truly, the rebel sailor's lot is a hard one," indignantly said Lady Lucille.

"Hard, indeed, and unjust I should say," Hortense rejoined in the same tone.

"Well, Lady Lucille, when he is captured, and captured he will be, I will see to it that he is pardoned upon the conditions I agreed upon," and the admiral smiled his blandest, while Lucille responded:

"When he is a prisoner, admiral, I will ask his pardon upon the same conditions."

The admiral looked delighted, and then accepted the invitation of Hortense to dine with her father and themselves that afternoon, after which they would go on board the Sea Sphinx for the run to Elm Haven by night.

The admiral accepted gladly, and was never more entertaining than on that evening, while he acted with Mr. Gerty as an escort for the young ladies down to the cutter, and bade them *bon voyage*, telling Captain Jules Girard that if he let any harm befall them he would lose his commission.

The cutter stood down the bay under a brisk wind, and it was steadily increasing, while the sky was overcast and growing blacker.

Gaining an offing, she found the sea rather wild, yet headed along the coast, the maidens, both of whom were good sailors, sitting on deck and rather enjoying the scene.

Soon after a sail was sighted, but the cutter kept close in-shore, hoping not to be seen.

But the hope was useless, for the stranger had already sighted the Sea Sphinx, and headed toward her in such a way as to cut her off, run up or down the coast as she might.

All was at once excitement on board, for the crew had recognized the buccaneer brig Blue Wing, and they well knew her speed, the accuracy of the aim of her gunners, and that she more than doubled them in size, battery and crew.

And the whisper was heard by Lady Lucille and Hortense, who now bitterly regretted not having gone by stage to Elm Haven.

To make matters worse, the storm increased in violence until at last Captain Girard felt compelled to drop both anchors while daylight remained to him, and thus ride out the tempest; but to the horror of all, half a mile to seaward, the brig rounded her head to the gale, and also dropped her anchors, to remain on watch until the gale passed over.

CHAPTER XXV.

"HO! THE CUTTER!"

CAPTAIN JULES GIRARD was in the deepest trouble.

There was a chance for him to make a home for himself by fighting his craft to the bitter end, and die on her decks in the defense of his fair guests.

But it was not just what he wished to do, for he preferred to save them and to live.

The part of the coast where he was anchored was, he could see, wild, desolate and rocky, with inlets here and there, a few islands, and a shore dangerous in the extreme.

If there was one on the cutter who could pilot the vessel to a safe harbor he feared the responsibility in such a storm, and with night coming on.

It had come on to blow heavier with the sunset as though the storm would hold through the night, in which case the sea would be terrible by morning, far more than would be safe for the little cutter on a lee-shore.

But her certainly fatal foe was the buccaneer brig lying half a mile away, both her anchors down and stripped to meet the blow.

There was no need of either vessel's dragging her anchors with the rock bottom beneath them, but there was danger of the cables parting with the strain, and of the cutter being drowned by the tremendous seas.

If she rode out the storm through the night, then there was the buccaneer to pounce upon her in the morning and make her his prey.

So it was not to be wondered at that Captain Girard, his officers and men, were anxious indeed.

And their anxiety could not be kept from the two maidens, who fully realized the situation.

They would not stay below, but, muffled up well, remained upon deck watching and waiting.

As the night wore on, the darkness increased, and the brig was lost sight of in the gloom; but yet in the blackness Jules Girard dared not leave his anchorage, for to force his way out to sea against such a tempest and the heavy waves was utterly impossible.

"Ho! the cutter!"

All started as though the hail had come from a sea spirit.

And it had come from the sea, and almost under the stern of the cutter.

"Ho, the cutter, ahoy!" hoarsely came a second hail.

"Ahoy! who hails?" cried Jules Girard, through his trumpet.

"A pilot! throw me a line and draw me on board!"

"Ay, ay! Silence all!" and the captain spoke sternly to his men who were breaking forth in a

cheer, although it would never have been heard on the brig, dimly seen in the distance.

Then, almost under the vessel's stern, and protected by the break thus offered from wind and waves, was a white surf-skiff, small, frail-looking, yet riding the wild sea like a cork.

In it was one person, his hands skillfully using the oars.

A line was thrown by Captain Girard himself and skillfully caught by the boat pilot.

"Another line, please, to make fast to my boat, for I must not lose her," came from the skiff.

Another line was thrown and made fast to the skiff's painter, and having noosed the other about his waist the pilot called out:

"Haul in, lads!"

He stood in his boat, which was drawn close up under the cutter's stern, and, a moment after, stood upon the deck of the Sea Sphinx.

"You are a daring, noble fellow, my man, to come out to me in such a storm, and you shall be well rewarded," said Jules Girard, grasping him by the hand.

"Please have the men haul my boat aboard, and then let me know if you have a third anchor."

"Yes, and a good one."

"Then mark your anchorage with floats, for you must slip your cables."

"Do you not think we could get the anchors up?"

"Do you see yonder brig?"

"Yes."

"Well, it is the buccaneer Blue Wing, and her anchors would be up as quickly as yours, and she'd follow you. So, slip your cables, get reefed stormsails set, and I'll run you to a safe anchorage, for if you did not swamp here by midnight, or drown, you would be dogged and taken by the buccaneer."

"Please set the example to your men, sir, by obeying my orders."

Jules Girard's face flushed with anger, and he seemed about to make a sharp reply; but he realized that he was at the mercy of the man, and gave the necessary orders.

The pilot stood at the wheel, and both Lady Lucille and Hortense regarded him fixedly.

He was a large, full-bodied man, wearing a heavy oilskin coat and hat, and had a slight hump upon his back.

His face was so shaded by his storm hat that it could not have been seen even in the light, but a light beard was visible, however, and his eyes seemed strangely bright.

"All ready to let go, sir!" came from forward.

"To your posts, all! Up with your canvas—let go!"

The voice of the pilot was commanding, and his orders were promptly obeyed, and at once the cutter swung away broadside to the storm, and went darting away, gradually falling off until before it, and in half an hour she had run in under the lee of an island, yet not to anchor, for the pilot held her along in her course in what now appeared to be a kind of a sound where she was protected greatly from both wind and waves.

At last she ran close in under the lee of an island, and the anchor being ready was let fall in a very quiet harborage.

"Well, Sir Pilot, you have saved my vessel, for I know just where I am now, having been in this harbor before, and there is not depth enough for the brig to come in."

"No, captain, and you need not dread her, as if your top masts are housed she cannot discover you and will think you have gone out to sea."

"I'll have them housed at once, so they cannot be seen at dawn over the land."

"As you say you know the place, captain, you are aware that it is open sailing from here, around yonder point out to sea."

"Yes, I've been here often before; but name your price, my good fellow, for your services, and I will not fret at a round sum."

"Captain, my reward is in having saved those on this deck from death, or even worse, had you fallen into the hands of Buccaneer Balfour."

"That is all, sir."

"But, my man, you deserve a generous reward, and as you are doubtless a poor man, I insist that you accept a bag of gold."

"No, captain, I did not serve you for gold, and I must be off, for I left one who will be anxious about me, so kindly let your men lower my skiff overboard, sir."

"Certainly," and the order was given, while Jules Girard said:

"You will not accept my gold, so come into the cabin at least, and let me drink your good-health."

"I am not fit to go into the cabin, sir, as I am, even did I wish to drink."

"Good-night, captain, and let me give you this little chart, which you may wish to look over and may find of interest after I have gone."

"Your servant, ladies—good-night captain and gentlemen," and thus addressing the two maidens, Jules Girard and his officers, and with a wave of his hand to the crew, he was about to go over the side, when Lady Lucille's touch was upon his arm, and she said:

"We owe you our lives, sir, and we will never forget you. Good-by."

She held forth her hand, which he took, as he did that of Hortense Gerty, and with a spring went over the side into his skiff, and quickly disappeared in the darkness.

"A strange fellow that, but a cool one, and brave to venture out to our aid, though that surf-skiff will never swamp in any sea, if properly managed."

"What is this he gave me, I wonder, and Captain Girard turned to the binnacle light with the paper the pilot had handed to him."

One glance at the paper, and the commander of the Sea Sphinx cried:

"My God! it was the Rebel Sailor, Conrad!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

SAFE.

BOTH Hortense and Lady Lucille uttered a cry, half of alarm, half of amazement, at the words of Jules Girard, who had betrayed who had been the daring pilot to save the cutter.

The young captain felt a flush of shame upon his face, for he had been the judge advocate of the court-martial which had sentenced Cecil Conrad to the gallows.

Of course he had heard of what had occurred to him in the American lines, and that he had escaped, but he, like the admiral, had taken the idea, or pretended to do so, that the patriot trial was a mockery, to prove that he had not been a rebel spy on board the Sea Fox.

He had escaped, and quickly upon it had followed one of his noble, generous deeds, at the risk of life, and Jules Girard again owed to the man he had persecuted, his life, the lives of his fair guests and crew, and the safety of his vessel.

In the suddenness that the knowledge had come upon him, and the impulsive generosity of his nature, he seized his trumpet and hailed loudly:

"Ho the surf-skiff, ahoy!"

No answer came.

"Ahoy! Conrad, ahoy!"

Still no response.

"Ahoy, Conrad! return to the cutter, and upon my honor you shall go at your will!"

But the wind and waves alone were heard, for no response came from the man who had so quickly departed in the surf-skiff.

"What does his note say, Captain Girard?" asked Hortense, unable longer to restrain her curiosity, and well knowing that Lady Lucille was as anxious to know as herself.

"Ah, yes; but let us adjourn to the cabin, for this anchorage is perfectly safe as I know, come the wind from which quarter it may, and we can read the note there."

The maidens gladly acquiesced, for they were cold and nervous after what they had passed through, and the warmth of the cabin would now make them feel better.

Seeing that they really needed it, and anxious to take something himself, Jules Girard poured out some wine and gave it to the young ladies, while he slyly indulged in a very seaman-like drink of brandy, which he concealed the nature of by taking it down at a single swallow.

Then he opened the note which had been handed to him.

It was a well, but hastily drawn chart of his present anchorage, and just how to run out to sea from it by two channels.

Then was written in Cecil Conrad's bold hand the following:

"TO CAPTAIN JULES GIRARD:—

"SIR:—Having learned that you had been placed in command of the Sea Sphinx, and from the shore with my glass, recognizing as you came to anchor at sunset, that you had ladies on board, and were hemmed in by the buccaneer brig, Blue Wing, I determined to go out and pilot you to a place of safety, from where you could also escape from Balfour the Pirate who was lying in wait for you."

"My reward will be in having saved the life of one who sentenced me to the yard-arm, and rescuing from destruction a vessel and crew of the Royal Navy, in which I am branded as a rebel spy, traitor and deserter, under sentence of death at the yard-arm, wherever captured on land or sea."

"That I also save from a pirate's power innocent women, will be a recompense unmix'd with a sweet revenge I feel in your case."

"I now go to your aid."

"(CECIL CONRAD.)"

"The Rebel Sailor."

Lady Lucille's face was bent down, and her expression could not be seen; and when he looked up, after reading the above letter, Jules Girard saw tears in the eyes of Hortense Gerty, who at once said indignantly:

"It is an outrage to persecute such a man, for cruel, unjust persecution it has been, and though a fugitive, hunted down by king's men and rebels, he still nobly befriends those who have been his bitterest foes."

Jules Girard writhed under these scathing words, but feeling that they were merited he frankly said:

"I believed him guilty, Miss Gerty, and now I do not, and from this night I am his friend, and would succor him if I lost my commission for so doing."

"Nobly said, Captain Girard," said Hortense, while Lady Lucille now looked up and said in a quiet way:

"Mr. Conrad must find such revenge as he had to-night most sweet."

As it was now getting late, and, free of dread, the maidens could sleep, Captain Girard left them in the possession of the cabin, and went to his own temporary quarters in the ward-room.

"Lu, I am falling more and more in love with your hero, that Sea Rebel; but you did not tell me he had a hump on his back," said Hortense, when they were alone.

"Nor has he, as that was a part of his disguise."

"And the reddish head?"

"Is false."

"Well, he is true as steel, and I half believe he recognized you with his glass from the shore, though he did not say so."

"I hardly think so."

"But I do, for there was one high point of land I noticed, and it was not half a mile away; while, as he saw you in the carriage that day, on your way to Boston, and knew the cutter's rendezvous was at Elm Haven, for which place her course was shaped, why he just knew that it must be you returning home, and that is just why he came out in that white shell to your aid."

"And yet you did not recognize his voice this time?"

"No, for he disguised it; but you remember I remarked that he had such a commanding voice, and that I thought that I had heard it before?"

"Yes, I do remember that, and I'll know it again under any circumstances; but what heroines we are becoming, Lu!"

"Yes, and how sleepy I am becoming."

With this hint that the night was wearing on, they went to their state-rooms, and when they awoke in the morning, found the cutter leagues at sea, and running swiftly for Elm Haven with the buccaneer brig nowhere in sight.

The storm had blown itself out, and the sun was shining brightly, though the sea was yet rough.

Still, the maidens did not mind the sea, and greatly enjoyed their breakfast, after which they enjoyed themselves watching for the cliff of Elm Haven to loom up.

It was afternoon when the Sea Sphinx dropped anchor in the haven, and as she had signaled that the ladies were on board, General Sir George Harwood went out in his own twelve-oared barge to receive them, and his face paled when he heard the danger they had escaped, and yet Lady Lucille marked his darkening brow when he learned who it was that had been the rescuer of the cutter.

The three captains of the vessels-of-war, the Sea Fox, brig Sweeper, and cutter Sea Sphinx, were invited to dine that evening at the mansion, and Lord Nevil and Major Pearley and the commander of the batteries, Major Marmaduke, also had invitations sent them, and the gallant act of the Sea Rebel, as Lady Lucille had pleasantly called Cecil Conrad, was the talk of the evening.

But Lady Lucille was most anxious to make known to Major Pearley and Lord Nevil of their adventure with the road-raiders after their leaving them, and a horseback ride was proposed for the next morning, which Hortense had skillfully arranged should be a quartette of Cecil Conrad's friends, as in her kindness of heart she had already begun to plot to have the British brand of outlawry erased from the name of the Sea Rebel, and doubtless the Americans would soon find out their mistake in having also unjustly sentenced him to death.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A WOMAN'S RESOLVE.

THE little sea-shore village something over a league from Elm Haven Mansion, was a resort of sailors, with a few farms in the back country and an occasional home of some rich American or Englishman.

Before the affairs at Concord and Lexington, which had ushered in the war between the Colonies and the mother country, large ships had sailed from the little port, and coasters by the dozen put in and out day and night, on voyages north and south.

But the war had paralyzed the business of the place, and all that the villagers wished to do, was to keep from attracting the attention of the British, and to remain apparently neutral in the struggle, though their sympathies were all with the patriots, and many a bold young seaman from the port had already gone away to seek service afloat under the new flag of America.

The most conspicuous house in the village was the Golden Anchor Inn, the landlord of which was considered a man with a history.

He had been wrecked off the coast one night, years before, and but for the fact that Cecil Conrad had gone to the rescue, and saved himself, his wife and daughter and certain chattels which he seemed to prize as dearly as his life, he would have been lost.

Liking the village, he had bought the Golden Anchor Inn, paying down ready gold for the same, and it was said that no better host could be found than Captain Clyde, who got his title from having been master of a ship.

He was a stern-looking man, with iron-gray hair and beard, and seldom spoke of his past

life, more than to say that he had been a sailor, and had made money trading in the West Indies.

Mrs. Clyde had been a beautiful, sad-faced woman, a lady born, all said who saw her, and faded like a flower and died, leaving her only child, a daughter, to her father's care.

Kate Clyde grew up to beautiful womanhood, a striking likeness of her Cuban mother, and not in the least resembling her father, whose perfect idol she was.

She was true-hearted and lovely in character as she was beautiful in face and form, and she had already completely turned the heads of the young men of the village, and made the hearts of some of them ache who realized that she was not to be won by them.

Since the night when Cecil Conrad, then a mere youth, had risked his life to save theirs, Captain Clyde had always held a warm affection for him, and Kate also greatly admired the handsome, dashing young sailor, as she grew older, and listened to his wondrous deeds of daring.

When he had accepted the position of lieutenant in the king's navy, dark looks had been cast upon him by the villagers, and one day a rupture had come when Cecil visited the port, which but for Kate and Captain Clyde would have ended fatally, perhaps, for the young sailor, as a number of the ruder element among the seamen had accused him of being a traitor, and attacked him.

When, however, it was known that his resignation as a king's officer had been refused, and that a court-martial had tried him and sentenced him to death as a rebel spy, the feeling in the village underwent a change, and recognizing how wrong they had been, the villagers wished to atone for the past.

The mystery that had hung over the Conrads, the fact that Captain Conrad had been suspected of having been a free sea-rover, and that his "ghost" haunted his old home, the woodlands and waters thereabout, were all forgotten when the British destroyed the once grand old stone mansion, and ready and willing hands had been found to rebuild the widow's home.

Then came the news that Cecil Conrad had joined the patriots, to at once be thrown in irons as a British spy, and his trial had quickly followed.

One evening a horseman arrived at the village and put up at the Golden Anchor.

He was known to Captain Clyde, and was given the best room and had supper at the table with the landlord and his daughter.

After the meal they adjourned to Kate's little parlor, and the stranger told how he was in the patriot service, and intended to fit out a privateer, in which Captain Clyde was to go in with him financially as half-owner.

This was a secret of course, and then the stranger went on to say how he had seen a young sailor in the American camp whom he would like to have had as first officer, but that he was under trial for being a British spy, though he did not believe it of him.

And worse still the sailor had been found guilty and his sentence had been that he should be taken under an escort to the army headquarters and hanged.

"Egad, if I was a younger man than I am, I'd raise a band of a dozen brave fellows and take the poor fellow away from the guards who are to escort him, and who will only number a lieutenant, a sergeant and eight men, for I heard the detail made out."

"If I saved him, I know he'd redeem himself, and he is just the kind of man I want for an officer, or I am no judge of a face."

Kate Clyde had suddenly become deeply interested, and she asked a great number of questions, about the trial, the sentence and when the prisoner was to be sent back to the main army.

"He stood his trial like a man, never flinched, and merely said that if he was to be hanged, he would like to have the execution take place on an English ship, as he did not wish his own countrymen, whom he had tried to serve to become his murderers."

"It is infamous," said Captain Clyde, and then he went on to tell his sailor friend who the youth was and all he knew about him.

In the mean time Kate had obtained certain information which she deemed valuable, and leaving her father and his friend to discuss the fitting out of a privateer to sail under the American flag, she went down to a side door and peeped into the tap-room.

"Yes, he is there, and so are the others," she muttered, and calling to the barmaid she bade her tell Ned Endicott to come out on the side piazza.

The young man referred to at once obeyed, and taking his arm Kate led him into her own little flower garden to a rustic arbor, greatly to the surprise and delight of the young sailor.

"Ned, I sent for you to know if I can trust you?"

"Perfectly, Miss Kate."

"You are the friend of Cecil Conrad, I believe?"

"Unto death," was the emphatic reply.

"Well, Cecil Conrad has been sentenced to death by the patriots as a British spy, and is to

be sent to-morrow to the main army headquarters to be hanged; but it must not be, Ned."

"No, it shall not be," was the determined response of the young sailor.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AT THE TWIN OAKS TAVERN.

"NED ENDICOTT you are a brave man, I well know, and true as steel."

"You owe your life to Cecil Conrad twice over, and you are the one to help me to rescue him from this cruel, shameful death, for you well know what father and I also owe to his courage."

"You intend, as you said, to go away and seek service on an American privateer, even if you had to go as a foremast-hand; but I know your skill as a sailor, and that you brought a ship home from China when the captain and two mates were killed in a mutiny, and that you are well worthy an officer's berth."

"Now, if you rescue Cecil Conrad I will pledge you a place as second officer upon an American privateer."

"More I cannot say, but you know I would not promise unless I could keep it."

"Why, Miss Kate, I would save Cecil without a reward, though I am happy, indeed, to know there is such a berth open to me, and I'll prove worthy of your confidence in me."

"I know that, Ned; but now to business."

"I am ready."

"I wish you to pick your men and get eight of them, and they must all be mounted and armed, but men whom you can trust."

"I have the money with which to secure horses, and you are to go to a certain point to-night and await until you hear from me."

"Father has a patriot officer's uniform here, of the lieutenant who died of his wounds here in the inn, and I know that he has in a trunk half a dozen suits and outfits of private soldiers, which he got from the men who went to sea from here some months ago on a craft that was to become a privateer."

"These I will bring down to the garden to-night and you must take them with you."

"You understand?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, when you get to the old Deserted Tavern, at the Twin Oaks Cross-Roads, you are to wait there for a messenger from me."

"That is all I need tell you to-night."

"I will obey, Miss Kate."

"Now, you can have one of my own horses to ride, while I can lend you two others from father's stable; but the others you must secure in some way."

"I'll have no trouble about that, Miss Kate."

"Now I'll get you the money, and you must buy food for your men and horses, and I need not tell you that you must leave the village one at a time, for this is a secret expedition."

"That is very evident, Miss Kate," said the young man, with a laugh, and he waited in the arbor until Kate Clyde went up-stairs and got some money for his expenses, and she then said:

"I will bring the uniforms here too, and have them in bags, so that they will be easily carried, and the robes and pistols too, for you are to be dragoons, Ned, you and your men."

"Anything to please you, Miss Kate," was the answer, and Ned Endicott went off upon his mission and one by one called those from the tap-room whom he wished to have go with him.

Others he found at their homes, or in other places, and when the provisions had been purchased by some, the horses secured by others, the party departed one by one excepting Ned Endicott and two others who went by the inn garden for the bundles which Kate had ready and handed over the fence to them.

As they rode off she stood in the darkness a moment, and then said in a determined way:

"It is a bold plot, this of mine; but it shall not fail; no, he must be saved."

To Kate's great pleasure, she found, upon returning to the parlor, that her father had decided to go next morning, on the coach leaving at dawn, for Newport, to see about securing a proper vessel, and she said:

"Father, you know that Ned Endicott has just returned home, and he would be a splendid second officer for the privateer."

"Yes, or first; I wish you had thought of it before; but I will see him to-night."

"No, father, he left town for a couple of days; but you will see him upon his return."

"Then you see him, Kate, and tell him to hold himself in readiness to go to sea as officer of a privateer, for he is a splendid fellow, and the very man you want, Dearing."

"I am glad to know of such a fellow, captain," said Captain Dearing, and it was decided that Ned Endicott should be engaged as second officer, perhaps as first, of the new privateer.

Soon after Kate retired, bidding her father and his guest good-by, as they would leave before dawn on the stage.

She arose, however, ere the rumble of the coach-wheels had ceased to echo through the village streets, and calling the hostler boy, asked him to saddle her horse, and said that she would mount him out in the barn.

Soon she appeared, in her riding-habit, and carrying a small bundle, while she said:

"Remember, Lynx, you are not to speak of the horses that went out last night, and let all at the inn believe that I went with my father in the coach."

"Yes, miss, I'll not tell if I was kilt for it."

"I can trust you, Lynx," and with this she mounted her spirited horse and rode out into the darkness, for dawn was just beginning to brighten the eastern skies.

Once out of the village, she dashed off at a rapid gallop, and four hours after rode up to a dilapidated old rookery, in a dense forest, and once known as the Twin Oaks Tavern, but which, from the highways having been changed, was deserted and crumbling to decay.

Often had Kate ridden or driven through the country with her father, who was fond of long pilgrimages, so she knew her way perfectly.

As she rode up, Ned Endicott came out and lifted her from the saddle, while he said:

"So you are the messenger we have been waiting for, Miss Kate?"

"Well, we are all here, nine of us, all mounted and armed, and have a led horse as you told me to have."

All who were there knew Kate Clyde well, and she greeted them with even more than her usual friendliness, and then said in her frank way:

"Boys, I have asked you to come here for a purpose, and I know that you are not only my friends, but the friends of Cecil Conrad."

"He was tried by the British as a rebel spy, and, as you know, escaped, and went to join the patriots."

"But some foes poisoned the minds of our people against him, and he was tried by the Americans as a British spy and sentenced to be hanged."

"He is to pass within five miles of here this afternoon, under a guard of an officer and a dozen men, and it is my intention to rescue him with your aid."

"Is there one here who fears to help me?"

"Not one!" came in a chorus of voices from the group.

"That is just as I knew it would be, boys, and now I'll tell you my plan."

"Ned here is to dress up in the uniform of a Continental dragoon officer, and you are dragoon soldiers."

"When the guard passes with Cecil Conrad, you are to overtake them, and Ned is to report to the officer in charge that he has been sent by General Arno to overtake them and take charge of the prisoner, while those having him under guard are to hasten with all dispatch to report to their regiment, which is under orders."

"I have here the name of the officer, and his regiment, and also the name of an officer in the dragoon regiment whom Ned is to impersonate."

"Once you have possession of the prisoner, you are all to scatter, throw off your uniforms, and by as many different ways as there are men among you, to return home, and arriving at night, no one will suspect you, and this plan will prevent bloodshed."

"And Cecil?" asked Ned Endicott.

"You, Ned, will come here with him, for I will await you."

"Do you all understand just what is to be done, boys?"

All announced in the affirmative, and then, while Kate sought rest in one of the rooms of the old rookery, the men began to rig themselves out in the uniforms of patriot soldiers.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN BORROWED PLUMAGE.

ALONG a highway that was not very frequently traveled, a party of horsemen were riding slowly upon the day that Kate Clyde met Ned Endicott and his men in the Twin Oaks Tavern.

They were soldiers, wearing the uniform of a regiment then on duty with the commander-in-chief of the patriot army, and the party consisted of a lieutenant, a sergeant, corporal and sixteen men, with one other, attired in a sailor suit riding in the center of the file.

This one was Cecil Conrad, and it could be seen that he was manacled heavily, both hands and feet.

The face of the prisoner was pale and haggard, for he had gone through much the past few weeks; but there was a look of indomitable fearlessness which shone from his eyes, and a spirit that could not be quenched.

Upon the faces of the officers and men who had him under guard there was an expression of sympathy, and if they spoke to him it was in a tone of respect allied to awe.

"I would give much, Mr. Conrad, if the commander-in-chief would pardon you, though I dare not hold out any hopes that such will be the case."

"You are very kind, Lieutenant Pickering, very kind; but it seems that I am destined to die, and so shall face my fate as a brave man should," was the reply.

As he uttered the words there came the clatter of hoofs in the rear and up dashed an officer of dragoons and eight men.

"Lieutenant Pickering, I believe, of the Third Continentals?" said the stranger.

"Yes, sir."

"I am Lieutenant Edgecomb of the First Dragoons, sir, and have orders from General Arno for you to transfer the prisoner, Cecil Conrad, the British spy, to my keeping, while you head across country with all dispatch and meet your regiment which is on the march and will camp to-night at Bennett's Ford, just twenty miles from here."

"Ah! at last our regiment is on the march, I am glad to hear, and it is sudden, for when I left the camp two days ago as a special escort to General Dupre, there was a fear that we would not move for a long time."

"I am glad to know you, Lieutenant Edgecomb, and thank you for the good news you bring."

"Here is the prisoner, poor fellow—Mr. Conrad, Lieutenant Edgecomb, whose orders you have just heard, will be your guardian from here on."

The prisoner bowed, but made no reply, and after surrendering his charge and the keys of his irons, Lieutenant Pickering and his men saluted and rode away on a road that branched off just there.

"Ned Endicott, that was the boldest game I ever saw played, and as well done too."

"God bless you all, my brave friends," and Cecil Conrad, who had been too utterly amazed before to speak, too filled with sudden hope and dread, grasped the hands of his brave friends and wrung them hard.

"Come, Master Cecil, let me get those irons off of you, and we'll all die right here before they shall go on again—there, now you are a free man, and let me tell you that this is not our plot, but that of one who awaits you now, and I'll take you there."

"Now boys, every one of you scatter, get out of your uniforms and make tracks for home on any path you deem best—they have the uniforms over their own clothes, Master Cecil, and it will not be healthy for them if they are caught in borrowed plumage."

"You go with me."

"All right, I am in your hands, Ned."

"Good-by, boys, and rest assured I'll not forget your good work for me this day."

With that the two started off at a gallop, and in half an hour dashed up to the Twin Oaks Tavern.

Kate Clyde met them at the door, and bending low over her hand Cecil Conrad pressed a kiss upon it, while he said earnestly:

"And you have saved me from the gallows, Kate Clyde!"

"It was noble of you, boldly planned and bravely executed—Ned did splendidly, I assure you, and I am proud of him as a friend."

"I knew that he would; but let me tell you that you are by no means yet safe, and you must go into the house and put on the uniform that Ned wears."

"Then I will go with you by a way that I know, having often ridden it with my father, and take you into the British lines, when you can put on the uniform of an English officer which I brought with me, and thence get near your own home, where you will be safe, and can run out to sea and escape."

"I have here also a false beard and wig, which, with other things were left at the inn by a company of dramatic players, fortunately for us."

"With them, if I can accompany you, we can get through the American lines, and then with the British uniform we can pass through the English lines near Elm Haven and so reach your home."

"I have a horse here for you, far better than the one you ride, which Ned can turn loose."

"Now do not say a word against my plans, or I will think you ungrateful."

"You are captain, Miss Kate, so I can but yield to your authority," was the response of the sailor, and soon after he appeared at the door in the uniform which Ned Endicott had discarded, and with the blonde wig and beard completely disguising him, and so well that it would pass a close observation.

Bidding Ned Endicott farewell, and expressing the hope to see him soon, Cecil Conrad raised Kate Clyde to her saddle, and mounting also, the two set off at a swift canter on the sailor's ride from the gallows.

CHAPTER XXX

A DESPERATE RIDE.

As Kate Clyde had said, the young patriot was by no means safe after his irons had been taken off, and he was on the way toward liberty.

The young girl had decided to play her plot for all it was worth, and with Cecil Conrad in the uniform of a Continental lieutenant, and riding with her, seemingly as an escort, she believed that he could pass through the lines of the patriots, especially wearing a false beard and wig as he did.

When reaching the British lines, it would

be easy for him to metamorphose himself into an English officer, and head toward Elm Haven, pretending to be the bearer of dispatches for General Sir George Arno, and also her escort.

Once near the lines about the fort of Elm Haven, after nightfall, they could make an oblique movement and reach the Conrad house, when in the darkness Cecil could run out to sea and make some port down the coast.

Such was Kate's bold plan, and a most cleverly conceived one.

So far it had been well carried out.

That morning early the guard with the sailor had left the advanced camp of General Arno, expecting to reach the main army in the afternoon, and the prisoner was to be hanged before sunset, for a cruiser had already been sent on ahead to prepare for the execution.

He had gone about one-half the distance when so cleverly rescued, and, as Kate Clyde had determined should be the case if possible, without trouble or bloodshed.

By short cuts, paths which Kate had often traveled with her father, in their long jaunts of days on horseback, she could leave General Arno's camp upon the left and reach the British lines late in the afternoon, and then it would be a ride of some fifteen or twenty miles to Elm Haven, or rather to the ruined Conrad homestead.

Of course it necessitated Kate making on her horse, from her early start from the inn, half a hundred miles, or more for the day, but horseflesh was not to be taken into consideration then, nor did she think of herself.

Ned Endicott and his brave comrades had gone back to their homes, and both Kate and the young sailor sincerely hoped they would all reach them in safety, yet the chances were even that some would not do so, as it was no easy thing then to go through the country unchallenged they both knew.

"Don't spare the horses, Master Cecil, but come along at a good gait."

"No one would know you, not even your best friend, in that horrid wig and beard, which by no means add to your good looks, and your uniform is small for you, rather; but never mind, I have seen worse."

"You are Lieutenant Endicott of the Coast Rangers, and I am your sister Kate—do you see?"

"Oh, yes, I see that you are the bravest little sister man ever had."

As they went on a party of eight cavalrymen under a sergeant passed, but the supposed lieutenant was saluted and no questions asked.

At last they came to an outpost, and once past it they knew that they would be upon what was known as neutral ground, the land between the two assumed lines.

At the halt of the sentinel Conrad rode forward and gave his name as Lieutenant Endicott, and that he was taking his sister to a farm-house to board, the said house he being well aware was half a mile beyond.

The sentinel called the corporal, and an officer was summoned, who at sight of Kate's beautiful face promptly permitted them to pass, when Cecil very coolly invited him to call upon him at headquarters, should he visit there soon.

"See what politeness does, corporal, for it will get me acquainted with that lovely girl," said the pleased officer, as the supposed brother and sister rode on.

No one else was seen or met with, for they took the most unfrequented paths, until they heard a woman's cry for help, and quick as a flash Cecil Conrad dashed to her rescue, for to his horror and amazement he beheld the lovely face of Lady Lucille.

In his surprise he had unwittingly spoken her name; but, seeing that two of the outlaws were *hors du combat*, and the other two in full flight, he rode rapidly on, fearful lest the reports of the firearms would bring troops to the rescue.

He also saw that the carriage was in full flight, and though dreading no more danger for Lady Lucille, wondered at her being there, and coming along a highway that led from the American lines.

"Master Cecil, that was Lady Lucille Harwood," said Kate, as they dashed on.

"Yes, and I wonder at her being there."

"It seems that you are always saving her from danger or death?"

"It has been my good fortune to be of service to her quite often, I admit; but is not this our road?"

"Yes, and we must ride on rapidly."

"We are pressing our horses rather severely."

"Better do so than be taken," was the significant reply.

"That was a brave rescue of yours awhile since, Master Cecil, for you risked life against four desperate men."

"I never thought of it, Miss Kate, and that I risked your life, too; but I supposed you would halt."

"Oh, no, I followed, and I only hope we will meet with no more dangers, for the strain is beginning to tell."

"My dear friend, you are the bravest of women, and I only hope it may be in my power some day to prove my appreciation of what you are doing for me."

"Don't speak of it, Master Cecil," and a silence fell between the two, broken only by the clatter of their horses' hoofs.

The sun was nearing the horizon, and the shadows were lengthening in the woodland, when they came upon a British outpost.

It was a camp of hussars—a sergeant and four men from Major Pearley's command.

Kate lowered her veil, while Cecil, who had, after crossing the American line, gone aside in the woods and metamorphosed himself into an English officer, now rode forward and drew rein.

Unheeding the challenge of the sentry on duty, he said pleasantly:

"Am I on the right road, my man, to Elm Haven, the headquarters of Major Pearley, of the hussars?"

"Yes, sir," said the sergeant, coming forward and saluting:

"You are going right for Elm Haven Mansion, the headquarters of General Harwood, but Major Pearley, our commandant, sir, has his quarters at Fort Lucille, a mile to the right of the manor-house upon the hill."

"Ah, thank you; but it is to the mansion I desire first to go, to escort this lady."

"Yes, sir."

"About how far is it, sergeant?"

"Seven miles, sir, and if you ride very briskly you may overtake Major Pearley, who with Lord Nevil passed here some fifteen minutes ago, but riding slowly."

"Ah, thank you, we will hasten on," and the two fugitives went forward at a gallop, while Kate said, coolly:

"A narrow escape that, for you would hardly have passed muster with either of those two officers, had we met them, while they both knew me, having been to the inn often."

"Yes, and had they recognized me, neither would have made it known, I am sure, for I never knew two truer friends or nobler men, Kate."

"I must tell you how they have befriended me," and Cecil Conrad did so.

Darkness soon overtook the two fugitives, but both now knew the way well, and branched off into the woodland two miles before reaching the fort.

This enabled them to flank the inlet and come upon Refuge Homestead from the village side.

In half an hour more they came to the edge of the thicket of pines, and the lights from Mrs. Conrad's now humble home were in plain view, not over two hundred yards distant.

CHAPTER XXXI.

OFF HIS COURSE.

"I WILL go forward and see that there is no danger," said Kate in a whisper, as they reined up their tired horses.

"No, I can tell soon, for Congo knows well this signal," and Cecil Conrad gave an exact imitation of the hoot of an owl.

This was repeated several times, when an answer came from near the cabin.

Again Cecil repeated it, and soon a dark form was seen coming toward the pines.

"I knew he would know my call. Ah, Congo!"

The African rushed up and seized the hand of the young sailor, in his joy uttering words in his own language, and at last he

was able to say that Mrs. Conrad, Kaloo and himself were alone at the cabin, and his mother, too, had recognized his call.

"Come, Kate, you must remain with mother to-night, and—"

"No, no, I cannot, dare not, for I must ride on home and reach there at night, so that no one will see me."

"Then I will accompany you, for—"

"No, I will not hear to it, for you must not think of such a thing."

Finding the maiden obdurate, Cecil told Congo to go and saddle the old farm-horse and accompany Kate, leading his horse, as far as the outskirts of the village, and while the African was gone he turned to the maiden and in a voice that quivered with emotion, told her how deeply he felt all that she had done for him.

She had told him during the day of how she had heard from Captain Pickering of his danger, and through questioning him had been able to carry out her plot of rescue.

She also told him that the captain and her father were to fit out a privateer, and what the old master had said of wishing to have him for a first officer.

"Now, Master Cecil, if you will go, and go at once to Newport, you will find father and Captain Pickering there."

"Knowing the coast as you do, you can run there in your shallop, and your disguise, when in sailor togs, will prevent recognition and you can find father and Captain Pickering at the shipping house of George Craven & Company."

"Tell father just what I did to rescue you, and you'll go out as first officer of the privateer, while Ned Endicott will be second officer."

"Now I'll not be content unless you promise to put to sea to-night, for see, it is clouding up and threatening rain, and you can readily run out and lie hidden during the day in some inlet."

"Do you promise?"

"Faithfully."

"Then good-by, and success attend you," and as she spoke Congo rode up.

Dismounting from his horse he gave the rein to Congo, and with a warm pressure of Kate's hand sent them off, while he walked on toward the cabin.

Congo had rushed by the cabin to tell the good news, and as he crossed the threshold Cecil Conrad found his mother's arms about him in a loving embrace.

After a word of welcome Kaloo slipped out, and after a while returned, but not alone, for the tall, white-robed form of the mysterious helmsman of the surf-skiff, with his long gray beard and hair, entered the room, and the greeting that he gave the young sailor was impressive and full of warmth.

An hour thus passed, in which Cecil Conrad told of his adventures, and learned how hard Lady Lucille, Lord Nevil and Major Pearley had tried to save him, while his mother added:

"She left home for Boston, my son, and it was her firm determination to save you, even if she had to go into the patriot lines and plead to the general for you."

"Ah!" said Cecil, quickly, and he at once understood why he had met Lady Lucille on the highway coming from the American lines.

"You must not stay here, Cecil, for when your escape is discovered it will be known to both armies, and in neither lines are you safe," said the helmsman.

"It is my wish to leave to-night in the shallop, only she is hard to manage alone."

"I will go with you as far as you please, and can return in my skiff by night runs along the coast, so let us get ready at once, provisioning and fitting out the craft, and my boat we can carry on deck."

"Come, you must be twenty miles from here down the coast by dawn," and the helmsman spoke in a tone of decision that showed he expected prompt action.

"I will be ready, sir, as soon as I change my clothes."

"Very well, I'll be getting the shallop in trim, and Congo can carry the provisions aboard while Kaloo gets together what we will need."

All sprung to work in earnest, and just at midnight, when Lady Lucille and Hortense were alighting from their carriage, at home,

Cecil Conrad bade his mother farewell and stepped on board the shallop.

The white-robed helmsman was at the tiller, sail was up, and the craft glided away in the intense darkness, for a drizzling rain was falling and not a star was visible.

"Good-by, my son, and God bless you!" had been the poor mother's parting words, and the rebel sailor felt that he was launched forth now, a fugitive from his native land, branded as an outlaw by both patriots and British, and with the world before him.

The surf-skiff was lashed on deck, and the wind was steady and strong, so that the Surf Angel, as the shallop was called, went along like a bird over the waters.

Not a ripple did she make, and the sentry on the cliff failed to see her in the darkness.

Out through the perilous channel she ran, and then after consultation with his companion, Cecil Conrad decided that it would be best to head for Newport, but to keep close in to the coast and run only by night, for, knowing the coast as he did, he was well aware that he could find plenty of hiding-places in which to remain during the day.

But hardly had the decision been made when a storm came sweeping along the coast, and not wishing to run in for shelter anywhere near Elm Haven, they put the Surf Angel before the gale and went scudding swiftly along.

The gale did not blow out until the following night, and then the shallop was headed for the coast, having been blown a long way off its course.

Upon the afternoon of the third day out they ran in under the lee of an island which Cecil Conrad knew well, and found shelter in a small basin where they knew they could rest securely.

Utterly worn out with their hard work, and being unable to cook any food, they were glad to rest, and also to take time to repair the damages the shallop had sustained.

They had all shipshape by the next afternoon, and were going to set sail that night, when going to a high point of the island on its sea side, Cecil discovered two sails in sight, and that another storm was raging far out at sea and coming landward, while the night threatened to be dark and tempestuous.

Taking a look at the vessels with his splendid sea-glass he recognized one as the cutter which the helmsman had told him had been sent to Elm Haven, and Jules Girard placed in command of, and the other he knew as the brig Blue Wing, under Balfour the Buccaneer, from whom he had escaped after having saved the craft from destruction one night, believing her to be a rebel privateer, and then piloting her to sea again, had discovered her true character and that Balfour intended to hold him, and force him to serve as an officer.

With his skiff towing astern, the rebel sailor, when the pirate was in his cabin, had slipped overboard and escaped.

With the memory of this before him now, he muttered:

"Oh, that the cutter was a match for you, Sir Pirate, for I have a revenge to square with you; but no, he has hemmed the cutter in, and both are forced to anchor in the face of that storm."

"Ha! there are ladies on board the cutter, and— By Heaven! it must be Lady Lucille returning to Elm Haven, for the Sea Sphinx is bound thither—"

"Aha, Sir Pirate, I'll cheat you of your prey this night, for I have on the shallop's deck a surf-skiff that will live in any sea."

He turned, as it was growing dark, and retraced his way to the basin, and made known to his companion what he had discovered and what he intended to do.

"There is no need for me to urge against it, Cecil, for with the lady of Elm Haven on board the cutter, you will go, and I have confidence in your powers to accomplish the work you cut out for yourself to do; but disguise yourself well, for remember you are going to board a king's craft, and you are branded there as an outlaw."

"I'll be careful, sir," and soon after, the life-skiff shot out of the basin on its perilous undertaking.

That the Sea Rebel accomplished the desperate task he had set himself to do, has already been seen by the reader, who wit-

nessed the gallant boarding of the Sea Sphinx and her rescue by the strange pilot, whose note left with Jules Girard had solved the mystery by making known who he was.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FOREBODINGS.

THE horseback ride, which Hortense Gerty had skillfully maneuvered for the next morning, in which herself and Lady Lucille, Lord Nevil and Major Pearley, should form the quartette, was postponed on account of rain.

And as though the fates were against them, the weather continued stormy for days, so that there was no opportunity for them to compare notes, and talk over the escape of the Sea Rebel, as he was now most generally spoken of.

News had come in to the British lines, from some prisoners captured by a dash of Major Pearley and a company of hussars, of the escape of the Sea Rebel, and how it had occurred and been discovered.

More was known, however, about the latter than the former, for who the perpetrators of the bold and clever rescue were no one seemed to know.

The prisoner had been on his way, it was said, to be executed, when a party of Continental troops had dashed up, and the officer, pretending to come from General Arno, had sent the lieutenant and his men, who were the guards, off on a tomfool errand, while they took charge of the doomed man.

After a ride of a couple of hours, the lieutenant had met the colonel of his regiment, on his way to visit General Arno, and comparing notes, they knew that a daring game had been successfully played for the escape of the sentenced sailor.

So back to the scene the officer and his squad were sent, while the colonel rode rapidly on to General Arno's, to learn that he had sent no officer as stated, and that Lieutenant Edgecomb was then in camp, and had not been away from it that day.

General Arno was secretly glad of the brave sailor's escape, after all he had heard, and at once dispatched a courier, as has been seen, with a note after Lady Lucille, while he decided, to give the fugitive all the time he could, to await the return of Lieutenant Pickering, and hear his report before ordering pursuit.

It was late when the lieutenant arrived, and reported that he was unable to find any one who had seen a body of cavalry, such as were with the pretended Lieutenant Edgecomb, and where they, or the prisoner had gone after the rescue, no one knew, or could guess even at it.

Then he told just how the exchange had been made, what had been said and all, and under the circumstances General Arno and the colonel did not order the officer under arrest for having been guilty of any great wrong, for orders were daily sent by officers from post to post and were expected to be obeyed.

An alarm was then given, and word sent to all the outposts, but fortunately for Cecil Conrad, at that time he had already passed beyond the patriot lines, and no one connected the blonde-haired, bearded lieutenant, accompanied by his sister, with the Sea Rebel who had a smoothly shaven face and was dressed in sailor costume.

Such was the story told by the prisoners taken, and opportunity was only wanting for Major Pearley to make it known to Lady Lucille, for with Sir George, Judge Hazel and his wife, Captain Burnett and other officers almost constantly present and the weather without permitting no walks or drives, it was impossible for the young hussar to see either of the maidens alone.

But at last a clear day came, and the quartette started for a horseback ride, and then Major Pearley told all that had been made known to him by the prisoners, of Cecil Conrad's remarkable escape, and heard from Lady Lucille the story of their perilous adventure with the road-robbers after the two officers had left them.

"And you think your rescuer was Cecil Conrad?" quickly asked Major Pearley.

"I am sure of it."

"Pray tell me why you think so?"

The major evidently had become more deeply interested than even the others could see, and so Lady Lucille gave all her reasons

for recognizing in the rescuer none other than the Sea Rebel.

"Dressed as a British dragoon, you say, Lady Lucille?"

"Yes."

"A lieutenant?"

"As well as I could see his insignia of rank."

"With blonde hair and beard?"

"Yes."

"A man of good size?"

"Yes."

"How mounted, please?"

"Upon a blood bay."

"And the lady with him?"

"Was a perfect horsewoman; wore a dark-blue habit, soft hat with plume."

"And how mounted?"

"Upon a jet-black horse. But why are you so particular, Major Pearley?"

"Because a sergeant on an outpost reported to me the next day two such persons as you described coming past his post, and asking for the right road to Elm Haven and my quarters."

"The sergeant gave him the proper information, and the officer said that he was to escort the lady to Elm Haven, and then seek my quarters."

"No such persons ever came, as you know, and as you recognized in the pretended dragoon officer who came to your rescue, the gallant Sea Rebel, I now know that the two who passed the sergeant's post were Conrad and the lady you saw with him, whoever she may be."

"There is no doubt of it; but who is she?" asked Lady Lucille.

"That I cannot even guess at; but one thing is certain."

"What, may I ask?"

"That Conrad came in his disguise straight to his home as he dared, and may be there now; in fact must be, and that will not do."

"He will be taken, then, if he remains."

"He certainly will be, and as we are all four his friends, we can ride over and see the widow; and you, Lady Lucille, must call her aside and tell her that his presence at home is known."

"I'll do it, Major Pearley, and we will go at once."

Fifteen minutes after found them drawing rein before the humble home of Mrs. Conrad, and slipping from her horse Lady Lucille entered the house under pretense of fastening up her hair, which she had purposely allowed to come down in her ride.

She was in the cabin for some little time, while the others were about the grounds examining the old ruins and gazing at the scenery.

When she again mounted her horse, her face was very grave, and as the four rode along together, their horses side by side, she said:

"I told Widow Conrad that I knew all about Conrad's escape, and that he had been tracked, with a lady on horseback, almost to his home, upon the night following his escape."

"She seemed surprised, and admitted that he had come home; but as to who his rescuers were, or who the horsewoman was, she would say nothing."

"Yet she told me that he had, that very night, at midnight, put to sea in his shallop, and that a severe storm had followed and she had been anxious about him."

"But I then told her of his rescue of us on the cutter several days afterward, and yet that did not seem to relieve her mind, for she said that he who had gone with him, to help man the shallop, had returned last night just before day, and he had also reported the Sea Rebel's rescue of the cutter, and that after having seen him run the Sphinx to a safe anchorage, he had waited for his return."

"Day came, and he did not come, and this man, whoever he was, saw the cutter far away on her course to Elm Haven, and discovered that the buccaneer brig had run into an anchorage under the lee of a reef."

"All day he waited, expecting Conrad's return, and supposing that he dared not come out while the brig was there, for he had taken his surf-skiff to board the cutter, having carried it on the deck of the shallop."

"That night passed, and in the morning the buccaneer brig had gone, but Conrad came not, and so in the shallop he began to visit the islands and search them."

"He passed two days in this work, and another in cruising about, and then gave up Conrad as either having struck a reef in the surf-skiff and been lost, or captured by the buccaneer, and so he returned home, arriving, as the widow said, last night."

Such was Lady Lucille's story, and with saddened hearts all rode back toward Elm Haven, filled with forebodings of evil to the young sailor, the fear that at last the Sea Rebel had met his death, and would be seen nor heard of more.

But suddenly the words of Hortense Gerty gave them some cheer, for she broke out with:

"See here, my gentle friends, that young Sea Rebel was not born to be hanged, that is certain, and from all I have heard of him as a swimmer and sailor, he was not born to be drowned, that is a certainty, while if he was captured by a buccaneer, he is smart enough to take care of himself, so mark my words all of you, that he will turn up again and be distinctly heard from."

"Bravo, for you, Miss Hortense, for you give us hope," said Lord Nevil, and the cloud of forebodings was tinged with a sorry hue of hope.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CAUGHT NAPPING.

THERE was a certain feeling of revenge in his heart, when Cecil Conrad moved away from the king's craft, Sea Sphinx, feeling that Jules Girard, and another officer on board, who had been on the court-martial which had found him guilty of being a rebel spy, and sentenced him to the yard-arm, owed to him their lives.

Balfour the buccaneer was too well known as a master of cruelty to have spared any of them, and he had made a boast that he would hang to the yard-arm of his brig any British officer he might capture.

As his sympathies were also expressed for the Colonists, he would only be too glad to have captured the cutter.

Cecil Conrad remembered that when he had piloted the brig back to sea again, out of Refuge Inlet, whither he had taken her in a storm, he had believed her to be an American privateer, and, but for a woman on board, a sweet-faced, sad-looking woman who told him that she was Buccaneer Balfour's wife, he would have been forced to remain on board and serve the pirates.

Perhaps that woman might have been an aid to the two maidens, Lady Lucille and Hortense Gerty, had Balfour taken the cutter; but then Cecil Conrad had been fearful of a sad fate for them and so had gone to their rescue.

His feeling of revenge, therefore, was at saving a king's cruiser, when in the name of that king there hung over him the brand of outlawry.

Upon nearing the cutter he had pulled rapidly away in the darkness, and soon disappeared in the gloom from the sight of those upon the vessel's deck.

He heard the hail and call of Jules Girard, and he smiled grimly as he rowed on unheeding it.

Well he knew that he had a ten-mile row back to the island where the shallop lay, and that, when out from under the lee of reefs and land, he would have a rough time of it.

But for this he did not care, though his thoughts were upon the cruel treatment he had received from his foes, and those who should have been his friends.

He soon found that the tide was against him and the wind changing, so found it hard work to pull into the teeth of the storm.

Suddenly his boat was seized by a mighty wave, tossed high into the air, and came down with a terrific shock that stove in her bottom.

He had struck a sunken rock!

To throw off his heavy storm coat, hat and boots was an instant's work, and, as the wrecked surf-skiff was hurled away by the waves, he struck out manfully for the island, the lee of which he had just left.

It was a herculean struggle of man against the elements, and yet he never faltered, but kept bravely on.

The swim was not a long one, not over the eighth of a mile, but it was one to bring forth all the giant strength of the man and his matchless nerve, and he kept on seemingly without fatigue until the island was close at

hand, and he had reached the quiet waters under its lee.

Then he staggered ashore, and climbing up among some stunted pines, raked up bundles of the straw and made himself a nest to lie in and get warmth and rest.

Wet through though he was, he soon began to feel passably comfortable, and dropped off to sleep with the idea that in the morning he could signal his companion in the shallop, who would be on the lookout for him, and if not, catching the tide going right, he could swim from place to place and reach the island, so he did not worry on that score.

When he sunk to sleep it was to fall into a slumber most profound, for he was tired, body and brain, with all that he had passed through.

Sleeping serenely he did not hear voices, or falling oars, as the dawn brightened, nor see a boat coming in around the point toward still water.

He did not see that the brig had moved her position, with the wind sweeping around, and now lay close in to an island not far away from where he was.

The boat made a landing, the men sprung ashore, and an officer started to ascend a high point, from which a fine observation could be obtained of the inland waters, for he was on the lookout for the cutter, which, however, on the changing of the wind, had left her anchorage and run out before dawn, and was now far away down the coast, safe from the buccaneer.

But this those on the brig did not know, and so they were searching for her, believing that she was hidden in-shore somewhere.

As the officer ascended the hill he came suddenly upon the sleeping form of the young sailor.

He returned at once and beckoned to some of his men, and they came with muskets, boarding-pikes and pistols, ready to meet a foe.

The officer pointed out the sleeping form, and surrounding the man, then came the sharp words:

"Ho, man ahoy!"

"It's time to turn out."

The sailor sprung to his feet, but was not stupid, like many, when aroused from a deep slumber.

He awoke to the situation at once, and so said:

"Well, sir, you caught me napping, so what now?"

"Ah! I know you now, sir: you are the pilot that saved the Blue Wing in a storm one night, and a bolder and better work I never saw done."

"Yes, I saved your vessel off Refuge Inlet, if you belong to the pirate brig Blue Wing."

"Softly, friend, for pirate is a harsh word, and we call ourselves simply buccaneers."

"A distinction without a difference, sir; but where is your brig?"

"She lies yonder."

"Ah, yes, she ran in there and anchored with the beating around of the storm."

"Yes, and now tell me if you have seen a king's cutter about here?"

"I saw one last evening."

"Where were you?"

"Coming in my skiff, which struck a reef and I had to swim ashore, so made me a nest there in the fine straw."

"I see; but where are you going, or rather were you, when you were wrecked?"

"To seek service afloat."

"On what?"

"An American cruiser?"

"Why won't a buccaneer craft do?"

"Because I am no pirate."

"There you are again—I said *buccaneer*."

"Very well, I am no buccaneer."

"Well, my duty is to find the cutter in hiding if I can, and if not to return aboard ship."

"I believe the cutter has gone."

"Where was she anchored?"

"Astern of us, off an island three leagues up the coast."

"She may be there now."

"No, the storm was too severe for her and nearly drowned her, and when it beat round she could not have gone into its teeth so came this way."

"Well, she is far away by this time; but perhaps you can see from the hill-top."

"Come with me, then."

They went together and the Sea Rebel's eye at once saw the cutter, and knowing she was safe, as she could easily reach Elm Haven, and be protected by the battery on the cliff, should the other vessels be away, he said:

"Yonder goes the cutter."

"You are right, and you have splendid eyes, my man; but now come on board the brig."

"Why do you take me there?"

"Do you wish to remain here?"

"Yes."

"And die?"

"No, I guess my friends will look me up."

"Well, I must take you with me, and if you wish a berth you can get one, for our first luff's position is open—I am third luff, you know."

"You will not leave me here?"

"Not I, and have Balfour make an example of me when some of the men told him I had found a man on the island."

"I'd like to, for I fancy you, and have not forgotten that you saved the lives of all on the brig, and I am sure you will not have a good time on board; but you must go."

Resistance was in vain, with a dozen armed men in call of the officer, and so Cecil Conrad calmly submitted to his fate, and said:

"As I cannot do otherwise, I submit; but may I ask if there is a woman on board—the captain's wife?"

The young officer started at this and said quickly:

"Ask no questions about her, for it will be the worst for you if you do."

Without another word the Sea Rebel followed the buccaneer officer down to the boat and was soon on the way to the Blue Wing.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE INFORMER'S FATE.

WITH water-shrunk clothes, bare feet and hatless, Cecil Conrad still appeared the man that he was, and upon reaching the brig stepped aft to the quarter-deck with the air of a born commander.

Even in the uncertainty of his fate, he could not but gaze upon the beautiful vessel with admiration as the boat approached her.

She seemed to crouch rather than lie upon the waters, and about her hull there was a gaunt look that indicated the racer.

She was very long, and narrow, and her bulwarks were high rising fore and aft in graceful curves.

Her bows were of a razor cut, and the bowsprit was seemingly too long, yet there was the canvas above to spread upon it.

Her stern projected, was curved and graceful, and her masts were extremely tall, and raking, with a width between them that gave a large area of foresail with which she was rigged, in addition to her squaresails.

In fact the brig seemed capable of spreading more sail than was usual on a vessel of twice her tonnage, and in spite of her weather-worn appearance all about her was in shipshape trim.

"She must sail well," he said, admiringly, and the enthusiastic reply of the officer was:

"She has never yet met her match, and she is as good a sea-boat as was ever launched."

"She is in bad trim now, has got some ugly wounds in her, and needs new canvas and rigging."

"Look at the length of those spars, and see if she cannot spread canvas enough for a vessel-of-war."

Cecil Conrad had no time to ask more, for they were alongside, and a moment after he stood before Balfour the Buccaneer, who sternly asked the lieutenant:

"Well, Mr. Haze, what have you here?"

"A man we found on the island, sir, and who was wrecked last night."

"Ah, and the brig?"

"Is five leagues away by this time down the coast."

"She had some pilot, then, who carried her into an anchorage last night?"

"I do not know, Captain Balfour."

"Do you know, sir?" and the buccaneer chief turned to Cecil Conrad.

"I am not in the British service, sir, and yonder craft flies the king's flag."

"Ah! now I recall that face and voice."

"Strange that I did not recognize both at the moment you boarded."

"You are the pilot who took me into Refuge Inlet?"

"I am, sir."

"You believed me to be an American privateer?"

"You so stated to me, sir."

"And, after putting me out to sea again, for fear I would be attacked by the British soldiers, you learned my character and deserted!"

"I had taken you out to sea, and when I knew that you determined to hold me and make me serve you, I slipped over the stern into my skiff and escaped."

"How did you learn this?" and the face of the chief was now dark with passion.

"You offered me the berth of the first officer, and I declined it, and then you said that I must serve you, so I escaped while you were in the cabin."

"With whose aid?"

"Not a man on the brig aided me, nor even saw me depart, for they were not expecting it."

"Not a man, no; but a woman."

"There was no woman on the deck when I left the brig."

"Did you not see one here?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Fiends infernal! do you question me?" roared Balfour.

"Yes, when I wish information," was the cool reply.

"Well, sir, I'll answer you."

"I wish to know, because on the night you left I had reason to believe that a woman, yes, my wife, for she was such, warned you that this was a pirate craft, and that I was Balfour the Buccaneer."

"I came on deck to find that you were gone, and though I put about and sought you, you were too clever to be caught, so escaped."

"The woman, my wife, had warned you, and she has suffered for it."

Cecil Conrad was sorry for the woman, and believing that he had her imprisoned on the ship, he determined to save her, if he could do so, from further suffering at any cost to himself, so he said:

"Did any one tell you that a woman, your wife you say, had warned me of this ship's true character?"

"Yes."

"Who told you such an infamous falsehood?"

"My God! was it not so?" almost groaned the man.

"I stood here by the skylight, which was opened, and looked down into your cabin, where I had been, you remember, after running you into the inlet, and I got to thinking, and the more I thought the more I was convinced that the brig was a pirate, and at once I decided to act, so I sent one of the men at the wheel forward on an errand, told the one who remained to keep her head just so, and not to turn his head or eyes in the slightest."

"Then I slipped behind him and went over the taffrail down by the tow-rope into my skiff."

"Cadiz! Cadiz!" fairly roared the buccaneer.

"Ay, ay, sir," came faintly from the cabin.

"Come on deck this instant, sir!"

"I am wounded, captain!"

"Curse you, do you hear?"

A moment after a man came out of the cabin.

His face was haggard, his eyes sunken, as if from suffering, and his left arm was in a sling.

It was a villainous face, dark, savage, brutal and cunning, and that he was a Spaniard a glance discerned.

"Ho! Mr. Haze, rig a rope for this man, and swing him up to the yard-arm."

The sudden and fierce command seemed to startle every ore on the ship.

The man Cadiz was the second officer of the ship, and had been the chief's friend.

The first officer had been killed, and when Cadiz got well all supposed he would naturally be promoted.

As for the man himself he gave a cry of horror.

"Do you mean to hang me, Captain Balfour?" he cried.

"Yes, liar! I shall hang you!"

"Why do you delay, Mr. Haze?"

"If I am made to wait, necks shall stretch aboard this brig."

The young officer delayed no longer, and the men sprung to work with an alacrity that showed great awe of the terrible chief.

As for Cecil Conrad he did not move, but calmly surveyed the scene.

He guessed at the situation at once, but was determined to protect the unfortunate woman, who, he now knew, at the risk of her own life had warned him.

The man Cadiz had without doubt told the chief that the woman had warned him to escape; but he would not betray her, and when looking into the cruel, brutal face of the pirate officer he thought that hanging was just what he deserved.

"She *did* tell him, she *did* warn him! I swear it by the cross, Captain Balfour."

"He dare not face me and say that she did not!" yelled Cadiz, now terribly alarmed.

"I do dare face you and tell you so, and you must be a low cur indeed to try and bring trouble upon a woman to protect yourself, for you were on deck, sir, and should have seen that I did not escape."

The words were boldly spoken, and they were a direct slap in the face to Cadiz, who muttered oaths and prayers indiscriminately, and started toward the Sea Rebel as though to spring upon him.

But there was that in the quiet dignity of the young sailor that warned him off.

"All ready, sir," called out Lieutenant Haze, and he stepped forward with the rope end.

"Have the man bound, and throw the noose over his head," was the stern response.

Cadiz writhed like a madman, and cursed, groaned, pleaded and shrieked in pain and fear, for his wounded arm caused him intense suffering.

"Oh, captain, do not hang me, for I am not fit to die," he cried, piteously, and Cecil Conrad's face became white and stern.

"You will never be any more fit, Cadiz, for you are the wickedest man on board the brig, and you have killed women as ruthlessly as you have men."

Cecil Conrad felt better at seeing him hanged through what he had said.

"Killed women? And you, you, Balfour the Buccaneer, did you not?"

"Up with him!" roared the buccaneer, and the wounded, struggling wretch was hauled into mid-air, the words he would have uttered choked off by the rope tightening around his throat.

"Get this craft under way," cried the chief almost immediately, and the men sprung to their posts.

"Mr. Haze, take the deck, sir, and head on a northeast course."

"When the brig is moving, send a man out upon the yard-arm to cut down that body, and let it drop into the sea."

"You, sir, I wish to see in my cabin," and Cecil Conrad quietly followed the buccaneer chief from the deck.

CHAPTER XXXV.

BALFOUR THE BUCCANEER.

UPON entering the cabin the buccaneer said:

"There is a decanter and a goblet; take some brandy, for you need it."

"Thank you, sir, I do," and Cecil Conrad poured out a drink and dashed it off, while the chief half-filled a silver goblet, and as he raised it to his lips, said in a significant tone:

"To your good sense, sir."

Placing the goblet upon the table, he suddenly clasped his hands behind him, and began to pace to and fro, for the brig was rocking gently at her anchorage.

As he did so, he motioned to Conrad to take a chair, and he dropped into it with an air of relief.

Then he began to look about him, and he had to confess that he was in the midst of a great deal of splendor.

In his many captures Balfour had taken the best for his cabin, and he certainly had taste.

There were quaint mirrors, luxurious divans and easy-chairs, drapings of velvet, silk and lace, and the decorations all seemed

to show a woman's hand in the arrangement.

Paintings worth large sums hung here and there, and the carpeting was of the finest Turkish rugging.

Silver candelabras were upon either side of the transom, and silverware was profusely seen upon all sides.

Then there were a number of costly swords, cimeters, yatagans and other bladed weapons, arranged in circles, with rifles, pistols and odd firearms in baskets.

The cabin was very large, occupying the entire beam and thirty feet of the stern of the brig.

Forward of it was a gangway, also adorned, and on either side of it large state-rooms, the door of one being open, so that Cecil Conrad could see that the same elegance was within that there was in the cabin.

Beyond the state-rooms were the quarters of the officers, and a door communicated, but there was a heavy iron bar on the cabin side, and the door was massive and iron studded.

This door was also open and beyond it was the caboose, and Cecil saw a negro moving about there getting breakfast.

The brig was certainly well arranged, handsomely fitted up, roomy and comfortable even for the men, whose quarters were by no means contracted or uncomfortable.

Until the brig began to move through the waters, heeling but slightly over, Conrad noticed, even under the stiff breeze blowing, the chief paced to and fro.

Then he threw himself into a chair and faced the young sailor, asking the abrupt question:

"Who are you, young man?"

"My name is Cecil Conrad. I am an American, and have been reared on this coast."

"You are a man of education?"

"Thanks to my parents, yes."

"You are an American, and yet when I last saw you you wore a British uniform."

"True, for I was a lieutenant in the British Navy, but resigned to serve the patriots, when war broke out between the Colonies and England."

"And you are now in the patriot service?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because, as I had been in the British service they accused me of being a spy and sentenced me to death; but I escaped and was on my way to seek service on board a Continental cruiser when I was wrecked, and gaining the island was found by your men."

"And you would go to sea and serve a people who sought to hang you as a spy?"

"Yes, for those on the vessel would not know me, and if I could make a name for myself, I could prove the falsity of the charges against me by my actions."

"My young friend, your nature is so guileless, I am almost tempted to call you a fool."

"It is doubtless your pleasure to insult those who are in your power."

"No, you are not such a fool as I thought; but you are what is known as an honest man, and one who has the courage of his convictions, for I, and many others, would go against a people who treated me as yours did you."

"Now I was a man once of good birth, education and riches."

"I however was a spendthrift and a gambler, and when my money was gone, I won and wedded a young girl, an heiress, against the wishes and threats of all her people."

"But she was true to me and handed me over her gold."

"I did not care for her then, so when I got her gold, I robbed her and fled with it all."

"A pirate captured me, and he got my fortune and I got my life by joining him."

"But luck fought me down, and so it went on until our craft was captured and I was among those sentenced to be hanged."

"In the bearded, long-haired, darkly bronzed private officer, which ten years had made me, none of my old friends knew me; but one did, and that was my wife, who had still remained true to me."

"Her lands and rents had increased, and she had money saved up; but every dollar of it she gave to get me free, and through her gold bribing the jailers I made my escape."

"I took her with me, and for two years all went well; but then I deserted her again, taking her money which she had gotten by selling her lands."

"I bought a ship and turned her into a pirate."

"But luck again beat me down and I was forced to go back to my wife and plead for forgiveness."

"I got it, and she told me of an inheritance in store for her."

"It took several years to get it, but it came at last, and knowing that luck was in my favor while she was with me, I told her that we would build a fine vessel and trade from port to port."

"She liked the idea and so I built this brig, after a model of my own, and you see for yourself she is a beauty."

"When she was ready I found we had but a few thousands left, for this craft was made in every respect like a king's yacht."

"Money I must have, and trading was too dull work, so I shipped a crew, captured guns from a transport, and turned the brig into a pirate."

"My wife had named her, and a blue wing is on either side of the bow."

"That was nearly three years ago, and it nearly broke my wife's heart when I turned pirate, but she clung to me still."

"Twice I put her ashore, and each time bad fortune befell me, so that she was my good angel."

"I had just taken her on board again, ten days before that night of storm, and when I needed badly the services of a good angel."

"You came out and saved us, so she still held her power, and you took us to sea again."

"Now, Cadiz, the man whom I hanged awhile ago was my friend; but I have of late suspected that he was treacherous, and meant to seize my vessel from me."

"He hated my wife because she despised him, and he it was who told me that he saw her slip from the cabin and hold a few minutes' conversation with you."

"Soon after, you were missing, and when Cadiz told me this, in my fury I shot her through the heart."

"Great God!" and Cecil Conrad sprang to his feet, his face the picture of contempt, anger and hatred toward the man before him.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

BEARDING THE LION.

"Sit down; for if I keep calm over my killing her whom I dearly loved, and who was my guiding star of luck, why should you get excited when you never even knew her?" and the buccaneer chief spoke with cynical calmness.

"It was not that I knew her, but at your fiendish act in killing a woman for any cause," came the bold response.

"Well, you are the boldest man I ever saw, to fairly fling an insult into my teeth, here upon my own vessel, with my crew around me, and you wholly at my mercy."

"I say just what I think of you, Sir Buccaneer."

"Young man, I admire you."

"It is what I cannot say of my feeling toward you."

"No, we have been reared in different schools, and you now regard me as a monster because I am a pirate."

"I had the same opinion of Red Rovers once."

"I know that there are lawless men that plow the seas for booty, for gold, and they kill to gain riches; but there are few of them who would kill in cold blood that noble, sad-faced true woman as you did."

"How did you know that she was sad-faced?" quickly and suspiciously asked the buccaneer.

"Did I not tell you that the cabin skylight was open and I saw her?"

"Ah! and deeply I regret the act, for I have had no luck since I killed her."

"My powder is well-nigh out, and I have not captured a prize of any value since."

"I got new anchors off of one prize, for you remember I had lost mine the night you

were my pilot, and the men are getting positively wicked."

"They in fact nearly mutinied when I killed my wife; but I made an example of some of the outspoken ones, and quieted them."

"Now I consider it luck to have met you again, and in such a way, too."

"You saved this brig from destruction, from going to pieces upon the rocks, and every soul upon it, so you have a claim upon her, and we have a claim upon you."

"My first luff was killed some months ago, and Cadiz died suddenly of an affection of the throat to-day," and the chief laughed at his cruel wit.

"Haze is a good fellow, a skillful seaman, but has too much heart, and is on that account not to be trusted in red deeds where a hand should not flinch if a woman's heart is beneath it."

"My crew has diminished by death, wounds and sickness, and I have but sixty-two men all told."

"My brig is in a weather-beaten condition, and needs overhauling from her keel to her truck, with new sails, rigging and all, and though I have ample booty on board, rich plunder that would bring a price, I have not got much gold."

"Now, you deserted me before, when a first luff's berth was open to you, and I was sorry for it, so sorry that I sent a bullet into her heart for being so mean as to warn you, when she knew how much I prized you as a man of skill and nerve."

"Mean? Do you apply such a term to her because she saved me from you?" indignantly cried Cecil Conrad, and the instant that he uttered the words he recalled what he had done, that he had admitted that the woman had warned him of his danger.

The chief's face showed, too, that he had noticed the slip; but he did not fly into a passion as Cecil expected he would.

Instead, he said in a voice hoarse and revengeful:

"She told you then, for you have said so, and thus does my conscience fret me no more for her death—I am glad that I killed her."

"It would take just such as you to rejoice in a deed so vile, Buccaneer Balfour," came the words boldly uttered.

Still the chief kept from flying into a passion.

"True, just such as I; but she was a traitor to me."

"A traitor, when you have but now told me that her whole life had been a life-long devotion to you, following you through misfortune and crime, and giving her gold to drag you from beneath the shadow of the gallows?"

"Out upon such manhood, chief."

"I speak warmly, for she, knowing her life was at stake, knowing you, came to me and warned me that that this was a pirate craft, that here I would be forced to lead a life of crime."

"I at once escaped, and I say here, in the presence of her murderer, God bless that noble woman, pirate's wife though she was."

"My dear sir, I admire you more and more."

"Never did I cross the path of a man before with just your nerve and daring—it is magnificent pluck, I assure you, and I listen to you with admiration as well as amazement."

"You told me that no woman had warned you of your danger, and so I believed that Cadiz lied and so had him hanged."

"I do not regret it."

"Nor I, for he richly deserved hanging."

"Well, he was wounded, and so useless, and then he was growing treacherous, too, while by his death I inherit his little fortune, which he has in his state-room yonder."

"Now if you do not fear that his ghost will haunt you, for being the cause of his death, why his room is at your service, his uniforms and all, and he has some new ones he has never worn and which will about fit you, for he was a large man, very large for a Spaniard."

"Now I'll forgive your hard hits at me, and that you were the cause of my killing my loved wife, and offer you the berth of first luff."

"My rules are one-fourth for myself, one-fourth for the officers, and the other half for the crew."

"As my first luff is dead, and Cadiz slipped life's cable also to-day, their effects go to you and to Haze, to be divided between you."

"Now I wish to fit out thoroughly, and to cruise in these waters, for now there will be big fortunes to gain and less risk, as the cruisers will be busy fighting each other, so cannot look after us."

"Now, what do you say?"

"I refuse, emphatically, of course."

"You have not thought of the consequences of a refusal."

"What are they?"

"Why, death."

"You will put me to death?"

"Certainly, for I never take prisoners."

"You did not capture me on a vessel."

"You are here."

"And if I refuse to turn pirate I am to die?"

"Yes, I'll send you in the wake of Cadiz."

"Hang me?"

"Certainly, for I told you that my ammunition was low, and I could not waste any."

"Ah, yes, so you said."

"You are cool about it."

"Why get excited, for one can die but once?"

"Well, you refuse?"

"I'll tell you what I'll do."

"Well?"

"You are short-handed, and need help?"

"Yes."

"I'll take my watch as first officer, and do my work faithfully as such, but I will not fire on an American vessel, or any other, while under the flag of a buccaneer, nor will I board or lead in action against any craft."

"What do you expect me to do with you?"

"Have the manhood to release me when the opportunity offers."

"Why should I?"

"I ask it for having saved your life and your brig."

"Ah, yes, I had forgotten that; but I'll accept your terms, and will wait until we get a chance to go into action."

"Then, if you refuse, why, I'll decide then what is best to be done."

"Agreed."

"Now go into the state-room yonder, the one Cadiz had, and rig up in some dry clothes, for I have plenty aboard ship, and then we'll have breakfast together."

"Afterward you will go on deck, for it will be eight bells, and you can relieve Mr. Haze."

"I understand, sir," and Cecil Conrad returned to the state-room assigned him, congratulating himself upon his temporary escape.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

UNDER THE BLACK FLAG.

CECIL CONRAD had found a uniform in the state-room of the pirate lieutenant Cadiz, which that worthy had never worn.

Though an ugly man, the Spanish first luff had been a dandy, and he was always neat in his appearance and dressed well.

It was an undress suit, and so Conrad had selected it, and, with a jaunty tarpaulin upon his head, he reported on deck for duty.

To his surprise, at breakfast he found Chief Balfour a very remarkable man.

He was thoroughly posted upon the pros and cons of the war with England, talked fluently and well, and would never have been believed the bloodthirsty wretch he really was to one who did not know him in his true character.

Cecil enjoyed his breakfast, for he was hungry, and the buccaneer lived well; he got for his table the very best food he could pillage from another vessel, or rob a coast farmer of.

When he started on deck, the buccaneer said:

"Permit me to present you with a sword, Mr. Conrad?"

He arose and took down a beautifully-manufactured blade, evidently made in far Eastern lands, and with a gem-studded hilt, while the belt was of finest leather and the buckle, of solid gold, as also was the sword scabbard.

"It belonged to a distinguished English

officer, and was presented to him by a Hindoo prince."

"He was passenger on a vessel I made a prize of, and died with this sword in his arm. I killed him."

Cecil Conrad had decided to play a part, and so he said quietly:

"I will accept the sword, Captain Balfour, for it is a magnificent weapon, and I thank you for it, sir."

Saluting the chief with it, he walked on deck just as the brig's bell struck eight bells.

"Mr. Haze, I will take your watch, sir," he said, in his dignified, courteous way.

The young officer looked at him with surprise, while he said, regretfully:

"Then he won you over, did he?"

"I am to serve as first officer, sir, as the brig is short-handed; but I am not going into action under the black flag against any vessel, unless, like this craft, it be a pirate."

Haze said no more, but he thought a great deal, and muttered to himself as he walked toward the ward-room:

"Now, if we sight a prize, and Conrad refuses to go into action, there is going to be the merriest row between Captain Balfour and himself that ever was."

"Well, Conrad does not recognize me, I see; but how could he with the change that seven years have made in me, and he never saw me very often either in the olden time."

"My God! I must not think of that olden time, for I am an outcast, an exile, homeless, with no country, and only this ship my home," and the young man spoke with the utmost bitterness.

Then he added:

"I wish that I had not brought Conrad aboard and braved the anger of the chief, for I fear I have only brought him to his death."

"That was a plucky thing in him to stand by the chief's wife."

"He did not know she was dead, so would not betray her, and saw Cadiz swung up with a complacency that was refreshing."

"The men knew that the captain's wife had been the one to warn him, for half a dozen saw her come out of the cabin and speak to him; but not one would tell on her, only that wretch Cadiz, and there was glad hearts in the fore-castle when he went aloft."

"Well, I'll await developments with greatest interest, and maybe I won't keep hands off."

So saying Mr. Haze descended to his quarters, he having been, while thus musing, standing by the bulwarks and gazing out over the sea as though with interest in the tumbling waves.

Cecil soon felt at home in his new berth, and looked up at the beautiful sails and then at the flying brig.

"She sails well, quartermaster, remarkably well," he said to the wheelman.

"Yes, sir, she's as fleet as a dolphin."

"She had a brush with the king's cruiser, Sea Fox, off the coast some short time ago?"

"Yes, sir, and we dropped her, though she gave us a few hard knocks."

"They have a good gunner on that craft, sir."

"Yes, it was the captain, for it is said he is the crack gunner in the royal navy."

"But you have good marksmen on the brig, too?"

"Yes, sir, and they get plenty of practice, sir."

"Doubtless," was the dry response of the Sea Rebel, and he began again to study the rig of the craft and see how he could improve it.

He soon had the crew at work, and standing in the companionway, lured by the superb voice of his new officer, Buccaneer Balfour saw him trim this sail, then that, and his skill soon showed itself in the increased speed of the brig.

"You are a born sailor, Mr. Conrad," he said, and he returned to the cabin.

When eight bells struck at noon, Captain Balfour took his watch on deck, and he said to Cecil Conrad as he relieved him:

"Can you not think of some place on the coast where it would be safe to refit the brig?"

"There are a number of places, Captain Balfour, where your vessel could refit in perfect safety."

"Well, as soon as I have captured several vessels, and get what more spars and sails I need, I'll have you run me into such a place

and the brig will come out in a month's time like a new vessel, and we can win fortunes rapidly."

Cecil Conrad made no reply, but he mentally hoped that he would not be on watch when any such vessel was sighted as the chief intended to make a prize of.

The next watch Mr. Haze took, and at eight o'clock Cecil went on duty again.

Toward midnight the lookout said:

"Sail, ho!"

Cecil Conrad already had his glass upon the stranger, and had not the lookout sighted her, she would never have been reported by him.

She was a large ship, and if a merchantman, would prove a valuable prize indeed.

But in answer to the lookout Conrad called out:

"Whereaway, my man?"

"Half a dozen points off the starboard bow, sir, and she has evidently crossed our course."

"Ay, ay, I see her," and after a minute more he added aloud:

"If she does not sight us, it is best to let her go on her way, for we wish no hard knocks from big fellows."

This implied to all who heard the words that the stranger was an armed vessel.

But as the brig grew nearer there were men on her whose trained vision told them that the stranger was no frigate.

But they said nothing and so the brig went on her way, leaving a rich prize to escape.

As midnight came a storm suddenly swept up, and Captain Balfour not coming on deck to take his watch, Conrad held on, and the masterly manner in which the new officer managed the ship convinced all that he was a perfect seaman; in fact they had seen his nerve and skill tried before.

"The captain had his drop too much, for he had been drinking hard since he killed his wife," whispered Haze, as he came on deck and found Conrad still on duty.

"It does not matter," replied Conrad, and he retired to his state-room and was soon fast asleep.

When he awoke in the morning Captain Balfour made no apologies for his not taking his watch.

What he chose to do he did not account for, and Conrad made no allusion to it.

Thus a month passed away and certainly fortune had favored Cecil Conrad, though both he and Haze were doing duty, for though half a dozen prizes had been taken not one had been brought to during his watch.

One was a coaster, and after being pillaged was allowed to go.

A second was a small schooner with merchandise, and the cargo was divided among the men, the crew being given the alternative of serving on the schooner or walking the plank, a favorite method of the buccaneer chief to get rid of his prisoners.

Eight of the nine accepted the berth as sailors on the pirate brig, but the plucky skipper refused and he was at once forced to walk the plank and did it gamely.

A third vessel was determined to resist, and so the chief fired upon her until she was in a sinking condition and not one of her small crew could be seen standing upon her decks.

From two other vessels the chief had gotten just what he wished in the way of spars and rigging, and in fact all that was needed to refit his vessel, for one of the craft was a store-ship going out with supplies to Halifax, for the British fleet.

In all these captures it had been Cecil Conrad's luck to be a passive looker-on; but as the brig headed for the Maine Coast, Chief Balfour telling his first officer that now he must find a secure haven for him to refit in, a vessel was sighted flying the flag of the Colonies.

Her build and appearance indicated that she was an American supply ship, or dispatch schooner, and Captain Balfour at once gave chase.

Cecil Conrad knew, after watching the chase awhile, that though the schooner was fast, the brig would overhaul her within the next three hours, and he would be on watch then.

If the stranger was what he believed, her loss would be a heavy blow to the patriots,

and so he decided to carry out his firm resolve and bring matters to a crisis with the chief.

Haze was on deck, and also recognized the situation and glanced at Conrad.

From what he saw he knew that the ordeal was approaching, and he said;

"Now for a scene that will paint the brig's decks with somebody's life-blood."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

PUT TO THE TEST.

It was Officer Haze's time to rest, but, professing deep interest in the chase of the schooner, he remained on deck.

It was just noon when Cecil Conrad took the deck, relieving the chief, who said, as he glanced toward the schooner:

"We will overhaul her within an hour, and I do not care to fire upon her, as she may be a powder ship.

"But bring her to within the next half-hour."

Conrad simply saluted, but made no reply.

He took up his glass and examined the schooner.

She was about a mile away, and was crowded from deck to truck with canvas.

A large schooner she was, and heeled over gracefully with her clouds of canvas, while she was making all of eight knots out of a six-knot breeze for ordinary craft.

At her peak floated the Continental flag, and upon her decks was visible a fair number in crew.

The brig was standing up better under her canvas, and was making a mile and a quarter to the schooner's mile.

Her men were grouped forward watching the chase with interest, and also their new officer, for it had become known through the ship that he had told the chief he would help him work the vessel, but would not fire upon any craft while under the black flag.

Would he have the nerve to maintain this position against so formidable an adversary as Balfour the Buccaneer?

The men all knew what their chief was in battle; they had seen many an exhibition of his wonderful strength, and his courage no one could doubt.

As a shot, he never missed his fire, and with a sword his crew considered him a marvel.

Would this new-comer dare him, they wondered?

All waited to see, and officer Haze was the most interested of all.

No flag was yet hoisted upon the brig—a fact the chief noticed when he came on deck to see why Conrad had not fired upon the schooner to bring her to.

Perhaps the chief remembered the threat of his new officer, not to fire upon a vessel, or to order the black flag hoisted.

"Mr. Conrad, we are within half a mile of the schooner, sir, and her men are at their guns, as I can see, though we have no reason to fear so light a battery and a crew of two-score men."

"Yes, sir."

"Order a shot sent over her, sir, and run up the sable flag with the firing of the piece."

Perhaps the chief spoke louder than was his wont, for his voice was heard in the fore-castle.

Then all eyes were turned upon the new officer.

He did not disappoint them as to what he would do.

Perfectly calm, he turned toward the buccaneer chief and said, also in a voice that reached every ear.

"I am no pirate, Captain Balfour. I promised only to help you work your vessel, as you had but one other officer, and I will not order the black flag hoisted, nor fire on yonder schooner."

The men drew their breath in expectation, accustomed as they were to scenes of carnage and horror.

The chief smiled, and stepped nearer to the Sea Rebel.

"Did you hear my order, Mr. Conrad, to hoist our sable flag and fire on yonder schooner?"

"I did hear your order, Buccaneer Balfour, and I refuse to obey it," was the cool response of the Sea Rebel.

"Unless you obey within the minute, sir, I shall run my sword through you."

There was no mistaking this threat, for the chief fairly roared the words.

Conrad simply dropped his hand upon the hilt of his sword, the magnificent weapon which Buccaneer Balfour had given him, and Officer Haze now noticed that he wore two pistols in his belt.

"That act of yours means resistance does it?" cried the chief.

"Self-preservation, Buccaneer Balfour, is the first law of nature," was the smiling response, and the manner of the new officer caused the crew to draw nearer.

What Buccaneer Balfour did he was always dramatic in, for he took from his fob a gold watch and glanced at it, which said:

"Your minute is up, Mr. Conrad."

"And I refuse, sir."

Quick as a flash Buccaneer Balfour whipped his sword from the scabbard and sprung toward the Sea Rebel.

But, the Sea Rebel was even quicker, and his blade met the weapon of Buccaneer Balfour and parried it skillfully.

The buccaneer's weapon was also a superb one, but it was longer by a couple of inches than the blade of Conrad, and his first lunge at the heart of the Sea Rebel showed him to be a master in swordsmanship.

The men had expected to see the Sea Rebel run through the heart, at the chief's desperate thrust; but, instead, he parried with great skill, and at once it became a duel, as all could see, between two masters of the weapons.

It had been Cecil Conrad's favorite sport, to fence, and his skill, nerve, activity and strength soon made him a wonderful hand with a blade, as the officers on board the Sea Rebel had discovered in friendly bouts with him.

Thus he had confidence in himself, and he knew that he had a dangerous adversary that wanted to kill him.

But this the chief had not first intended, after his lunge, for he meant to disarm and humiliate him, pardon him, and yet force the daring Sea Rebel to serve him as an officer.

But, becoming enraged at the splendid play of the young sailor, he determined to kill him then and there.

As for the chief, Conrad held only contempt and hatred. He remembered how he had wrecked the life of his young wife, and then had killed her without compunction or remorse.

He remembered Balfour's life of crime, and now determined to kill the Red Rover upon his own deck, be the consequences to himself what they might.

The men gathered closer and closer, and all watched in silence the terrible combat, the brig yawing badly, as the helmsmen lost their interest in steering for that in the combat.

The schooner seemed to know that something was wrong on the brig, and held on steadily, though the crew were seen to mount in the rigging, and, clinging to the ratlines, to gaze astern at their pursuer.

In the mean time the buccaneer chief had become maddened at his inability to kill, or disarm his adversary, and was pressing him with all the skill he could command, his face wild with passion, and his eyes glaring like coals in his frenzy.

As for Cecil Conrad, he was resolute and cool, and now and then when thwarting some clever thrust or lunge of the buccaneer, would smile, as though he enjoyed the sport.

At last the buccaneer pressed his foe harder than ever, and it could be seen that he was desperate, for now and then his left hand played dangerously near his pistol-butt, as though to end it suddenly that way.

Seeing this Conrad also pressed him harder than before, and suddenly getting the opportunity, drove his sword to the very hilt in Balfour's body, whose nerveless hand drew a pistol to fire, but had not the strength to level it, and the weapon sent a bullet into the deck.

"Cut him to pieces, men!" moaned the buccaneer chief as he sunk upon the deck.

Several dark-faced Spaniards rushed forward to obey, and there was a general movement in the crew to close in around the spot.

But, quick as a flash, Conrad drew one of the pistols from his belt and sent a bullet into the center of the forehead of the Spaniard

nearest to him, while, throwing aside the now useless weapon, he drew the second, and with his sword ready, faced the crew and said, with a calmness that was more impressive than if he had spoken in thunder tones:

"Men, I shall sell my life dearly if you come to take it! As I have slain Buccaneer Balfour, so I will slay any of his crew who dares to lift his hand against me!"

And the Sea Rebel stood grandly at bay.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE MUTINEERS.

OFFICER HAZE had remained a quiet but deeply interested spectator of the combat between his chief and the man who had boldly kept his word when put to the test.

He had watched the varying expression upon the faces of the men, and he seemed to read them well.

He saw that some of them meant trouble, but others he knew he could trust. He moved so as to attract the eyes of the latter. They appeared to understand his signal, for they began to group themselves together.

When he saw that he had enough to begin action with, he once more regarded the combat with the look of one who enjoyed such a splendid specimen of skill and nerve as was being exhibited by both combatants.

When he observed that the chief was growing desperate, he really feared for Conrad; but the way in which the daring sailor now showed his skill, and the endurance which had been lurking behind it, told him that the dreaded buccaneer chief had at last met his match.

But would Conrad kill or disarm the chief?

That he could only guess at, and yet it was no guess-work as to what the buccaneer would do if the opportunity offered.

When the sword of the Sea Rebel pierced the breast of the buccaneer, Haze turned toward the crew:

In that moment of wild excitement he could not tell what would follow; but there came quickly the rush of the Spaniards and the death of the leader by a shot that was fired with deadly aim, showing that the young sailor's nerve had not yet deserted him.

At Conrad's words Officer Haze sprung to his side, and cried:

"Men, I will stand by our first officer with my life. Are any against me?"

He gave a glance toward the men he thought he could depend upon, and they quickly began to move in behind the two officers, while their numbers increased, and the boatswain called out:

"The captain is dead, and the first officer commands this brig. You know him, men, and would you harm one who came out that awful night to save you from death?"

The crew of the lately-captured vessel, who had been forced to serve on the pirate brig, had also moved to the back of the officers, and the neat little speech of the boatswain had the effect of bringing more, so that but one fourth held out and stood sullenly apart.

Cecil glanced over the men at his back and said, pleasantly:

"Lads, I thank you, and with our odds, we can afford to be generous.

"Come, my men," and he turned to those who remained sullenly apart:

"Come, do you submit?"

A chorus in the negative was the reply, and Conrad read them aright.

They were the Spaniards and West Indians, who felt that under him there would be no "booty and beauty" coming.

"You refuse, men, to submit to my authority?"

"Yes! you are not our chief.

"Let Corona be chief," cried one.

Corona was the most villainous-faced man of the lot, and he at once sprung to the head of his friends, waved his long, ugly knife, and cried:

"Si! yes, I be chief!"

With a bound the Sea Rebel confronted him; his sword swept through the air with a *swish* like a whip, and the Spaniard's hand dropped to the deck, severed at the wrist, and still grasping the long-bladed knife!

A shriek of agony burst from the mutineer's lips, while his fellows stepped quickly back, appalled by the act, and cowering be-

fore the flashing eyes of the now enraged Sea Rebel.

"Do you submit? Answer, or I'll have you hurled into the sea."

The voice rung like a bugle, and the mutineers set up a great howl for mercy, while Corona, with the bleeding stump of his arm, dropped upon his knees and began to mutter prayers.

"Officer Haze, see that that man is sent to the surgeon; then have those bodies sewed in hammocks and thrown overboard, after which muster the crew aft, for I would talk with them."

"He's the best I ever saw," muttered Officer Haze, as he quickly obeyed the orders given him.

The chief's body was quickly relieved of any valuables, as was that of the dead Spaniard, and, having been sewn up in hammocks, were tossed overboard as the brig still sped along.

Corona had been sent below, where the brig's apothecary and barber, also acting as surgeon, was dressing his wound and talking admiringly of the great skill of "the new captain," as he called him.

Hearing the men being mustered aft, he left the arm half dressed and hurried on deck to learn what was to be said by the first officer.

The men stood silently and attentive, and Conrad now came a few steps toward them, and said:

"Lads, I did not come on board this brig by my own will, and your chief sought to force me to become a pirate and to serve him."

"You saw, a while ago, that I kept my word—never to hoist the black flag, nor to fire upon a vessel while that accursed emblem of piracy waved above me."

"Your chief is dead. I now stand in his stead. I have this to say to you—that, with this fleet brig put in perfect trim, we can defy the cruisers of Great Britain and capture many a rich prize flying the ensign of England."

"To-day the flags of every nation are against you; but, as American privateersmen, England alone is our foe, America is our home, and we strike in a noble cause—for freedom."

"It is my desire to fit this vessel out thoroughly and float over her decks the Continental flag, warring against England alone, and as American sailors fighting for the patriot cause, I can in the end promise you pardons for your past crimes, and you can also win fame and fortune."

"If there are any Englishmen among you who care not to fight against your country, or any who may wish to leave the brig, I will, after all the booty on board, your captain's share as well, is divided among you, set you free, to go your way, landing you at a point on the coast from whence you can readily reach Boston or Halifax."

"And remember, men, that in this division of booty I touch not one pound of pirate money or plunder; it all goes to you."

"Officer Haze, I ask you for your decision."

The young officer sprung forward and, seizing the hand of Conrad, cried in a quivering voice:

"Officer Conrad, you are my benefactor, my friend, and you open a career of honor before me. Like you I served Captain Balfour unwillingly, having been captured by him, and now that I can blot out the past, I shall serve you most willingly and devotedly. Men, is there a dissenting voice to mine?"

A wild cheer broke from four-fifths of the crew, who were only too glad to thus take the noose of the hangman from about their necks; but a few were too hardened to care for aught else than pirate booty.

These were quickly told off, while an inventory of the booty and gold on board was taken by Officer Haze, who paid the dissenters their share in cash.

Then the brig, to the astonishment and delight of those on the schooner, left her to go on her course unmolested, and she put away for the Massachusetts Coast, under all sails.

The dissenters, those who preferred to continue their piratic career, were landed at a point near Portsmouth, in a boat belonging to one of the brig's prizes. They were told to pretend to be a shipwrecked crew. Al-

most to a man they were the Spaniards who had mutinied, and Corona was still their leader, in spite of his having lost his right hand, the stump of which he shook vengefully at Cecil Conrad, as the boat pulled away, and hissed through his shut teeth:

"*Caramba!* we meet again some day, and then—"

"I'll hang you at the yard-arm," supplemented Conrad, with a light laugh, as he turned to the helmsman and put the brig on her course for a retreat on the coast, which he knew would be the very hiding-place for the Blue Wing to refit.

CHAPTER XL.

THE SPANIARD'S PLOT.

THE retreat was reached at night, but Conrad, who had often found shelter there with his little coaster, felt no hesitation about running in, and skillfully piloted the brig to an anchorage in the basin.

A more secluded spot could not be found, and it was like a deep pool surrounded by overhanging rocks, rising high enough with their summit covered by pines to hide the topmasts of a frigate.

The basin was hardly two acres in size, and in one side was just what Conrad had said, almost a natural dock, which the brig could enter at high tide, and by damming the entrance, scarcely fifty feet wide, she could be braced there high and dry, to work upon her hull.

The topmasts and all the rigging were stripped from her, the cargo put ashore and her guns mounted on a shelf of rock to command the basin if attacked, and thus lightened the brig was floated into the natural dock and braced in position, when the work, at low tide could be done on the hull.

As the place was in an island there was no dread of the work being heard, nor of visitors, especially as the channel leading to the basin was a circuitous and dangerous one.

There was also no danger of desertion, as the boats were hauled ashore and guarded, except one, in which it was the intention of Cecil Conrad to sail, by night runs, along the coast to his home and secure additional men for his crew, for all told he had not fifty after the departure of the Spaniards.

After the work was well under way, leaving Officer Haze in command, Cecil Conrad set sail one night at dark alone in the brig's yawl, which had been decked over, fitted with jib and mainsail, provisioned and made comfortable for the run.

Utterly fearless, he was yet most cautious and determined to take no risks he could avoid.

The yawl was a good sea-boat, stiff in a blow and very fast, and by running at night only, hugging the coast and hiding by day, Conrad felt sure of reaching The Refuge Inlet in safety.

For the greater precaution, the sails, spars and boat had all been painted a dark color, so that the little craft would attract no one at night when a short distance away.

The third night's run was about to begin, when suddenly, as Conrad lay alongside of a rock, for the wind was light, and just intending to raise sail, a boat came in sight.

It came noiselessly under muffled oars, and came to a stand-still near him.

He saw that there were about fifteen men in the boat, and he at once thought of the Spaniards who had deserted the brig, and to convince him that he was right in his surmise, one said in Spanish:

"The schooner is to anchor yonder for the night, on this side of that island and close to it, for I heard the commandant give the order to his lieutenant, and say he would be down soon after midnight, so we will row there and hide on the island."

"How many men did you say were in the crew, Corona?" asked one oarsman.

"The commandant has eight oarsmen in his boat, a midshipman and coxswain."

"Eleven."

"Yes."

"And on the schooner?"

"Twenty."

"Are we enough?"

"*Caramba*, yes, for we come as the commandant, don't you see, and Anglice here will answer hail that it is the commandant,

and we get on board before they know and kill them."

"Yes, we can do it in that way."

"What is the schooner's tonnage?"

"Seventy tons."

"How many guns?"

"Three; one eighteen and two nines."

"Good, and she is fast, Corona?"

"Like the wind, so we can use her to go to the Indies, and there cruise for gold."

This idea seemed to please the others, and then one asked where the schooner then was.

"Cruising in offing; but she came in this morning to leave the British captain, and was to anchor at the island to night at midnight," came the answer in Corona's voice, and he added:

"Oh, I found out all, if I was wounded, and I'll be *El Capitan* Corona now."

"Yes," said all in a chorus, and the boat moved noiselessly away toward the island.

"Well, these fellows give us a chance to put the noose about their necks sooner than I expected."

"And what a devilish plot it is that Corona has concocted."

"He has heard enough to enable him to capture the little British coast-guard schooner on this coast, and it can be done just as he has planned it shall be."

"Now I'll just remain here to-night and thwart those fellows; but how to do it is the question."

"Ah! it is not much of a swim, so I'll go that way."

So musing Conrad sat on the rock watching and waiting.

An hour passed and a vessel hove in sight, which his glass showed was the schooner, and she was heading for an anchorage near the island.

So he began to throw off his outer clothing, and arrange for his swim, which he found would be easy as the tide was nearly flood.

He made him a support of oars, in case of need, and stripped to his waist, and with only his pants on, began the swim.

The schooner came slowly along, for the wind was light, and dropped anchor in the channel, when he was a hundred yards away, and soon after those on deck were startled by hearing in a low voice:

"Throw me a rope and make no noise about it."

An officer obeyed and Conrad clambered on board.

"A moment, sir, will explain my coming," he said, abruptly.

"I was in my boat ashore, yonder where you see that large tree, and a long-boat came near, the oars muffled, and resting on their oars the men plotted to board your craft to-night, kill you all and capture the schooner."

"The officer who had instructions from your captain, who is up in the town in the long-boat with a midgy, coxswain and eight men, will know if he was ordered to anchor here and await his coming about midnight."

"The plotters also said that you had about twenty men on board, three guns, and that one of their number, who is an Englishman, for the others are Spaniards, would answer your hail by saying that it was the captain."

"I did not dare come off in my boat, for fear of being seen, and so swam out to you."

To express the surprise and pleasure of all on the schooner would be impossible, for they at once knew all must be as the stranger reported, and when he continued, after the two officers on board had thanked him heartily, all listened attentively.

"As I am myself a seaman, sir, may I suggest that you station some of your men in the rigging with several cannon-balls to throw down into the boat, and thus sink it and prevent escape, the moment that the volley has been fired, when the boat comes alongside?"

"My dear sir, will you put on one of my coats and just take command and spring this trap in your own way, for you will do me a great favor, I assure you?" said the lieutenant in command.

Thus urged, Conrad accepted the invitation, and the quick and business-like manner in which he arranged to meet the attack, showed all that he was no stranger to such scenes.

Soon after all was in readiness, the boat came in sight, and Conrad hailed:

"Boat ahoy!"

"Ahoy the Gold Spurl" came the answer.

"Who are you?"

"The captain returning."

"Did you know the voice?" whispered Conrad of the officer crouching in the companionway near him.

"No, it is not our boat."

"You will soon be sure," was the answer, and a minute after the boat ranged alongside, and with wild yells and oaths the Spaniards sprung on deck.

"Fire!"

With the command of Conrad, a dozen muskets flashed, and from aloft came as many cannon-balls crashing into the boat and knocking great holes in the bottom.

Surprised and terrorized, the Spaniards sprung back into their boats, half a dozen only being able to do so, and they were left floating in the sea, while Corona and one other had been captured unharmed.

Not a British seaman had been hurt, and but for the warning of the stranger they all knew what their fate would have been.

"My dear friend, we owe you our lives, and you will be our guest until the captain returns to thank you," and the lieutenant grasped Conrad's hand.

"No, I must be off, sir, and at once."

"But I insist—"

"No, I must return to my boat."

"You have not given me your name, sir, and—"

Conrad paused, then asked:

"May I go into your cabin and write a note?"

"Certainly," and the officer led the way, and Conrad hastily scribbled a few lines, the officer watching him with deep interest the while, and gazing upon his splendid physique with intense admiration.

"This is addressed to Admiral Lord Chester Chauncey Burton, so kindly see that it reaches him, and you will repay any service I have done you to-night."

"Good-night, sir," and with a plunge, head-first, Conrad was in the sea, and the officers and crew of the schooner stood gazing at the spot where he had disappeared, as though they expected to see him reappear.

But Conrad made a long dive shoreward, and then swam quickly toward his boat, which he poled noiselessly out from its landing-place until the schooner was no longer visible, when he stepped his mast, raised sail and sped along on his course.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MIDNIGHT VISIT.

It was midnight, six days after leaving the brig in her secret retreat, that the little yawl and her solitary navigator came off The Refuge Inlet.

By laying up by day and resting, Conrad had been enabled to keep up all night, and, knowing the coast as he did, he had not only made a good run of it, but he had avoided every possible danger.

He could have reached the inlet sooner, but he had waited for a dark night, of storm or rain, and he had been fortunate in not having to wait long.

He did not know what changes had taken place in the inlet since his departure, and it was necessary for him to enter with the greatest caution.

That his mother believed him dead, after his companion in the surf-skiff had returned and reported that he could not find him, he was sure, and he was anxious to relieve her anxiety regarding him, for what must she not suffer?

The rain was falling steadily, and the wind was light from the sea, and only the experienced eye and ear of the young sailor could have run the little craft into the inlet in safety, for he seemed to be guided more by the sound of the waves on the shore than by anything he could see.

If the sentinel on the cliff had been watching the waters, he could never have seen that dark hull and sail gliding past.

But Conrad did not err, and reached the head of the inlet, sprung ashore and stole noiselessly toward the little cabin, in the window of which he saw a light.

It was his mother's room, and to be certain that all was well, he gave his signal of the owl's hoot.

He saw the light glimmering as though

moved quickly, the door opened, but with no light in the hall, and the signal was answered.

"Congo!"

With a few bounds the African was by his side, then down at his feet, clasping him around the legs, as a token of his joy and adoration.

Then he quickly walked forward, for Congo warned him of no danger, and the fond mother met him in the door of her room, her face pale, haggard and stamped with past sorrows, which present joy was swiftly banishing.

Kaloo had crept forward and kissed his hand, after which she had retired to get a hot supper for the young master, while Congo had disappeared, though all knew whither he had gone.

In a quarter of an hour he was back again, and with him came the white-robed helmsman, whose gray hair and beard seemed to have whitened in the short time since Conrad had seen him last.

"My yawl draws just two feet, and I can ship her mast, so I will have to ask you to give her room in your hiding-place, sir, for I cannot run out again to-night."

"Gladly, Cecil, so gladly; but now tell me of your escape, for hope and fear have battled hard in my heart of late, as I hoped to see you again, yet dreaded you were dead, while your poor mother has grown wan-looking, yet still refused to give up hope."

"I will tell you my story, and it is a strange one; but good has come out of trials, hardships and dangers, as you will see," and Cecil told of his adventures from the time of his boarding the Sea Sphinx up to his coming that night, and continuing, said:

"Now, mother, it was mostly for your sake, to relieve your anxiety, that I came here, but my coming is a secret, of course."

"I could have gotten men elsewhere, but I want some of the splendid boys from the village, and I wish you would write a note to pretty Kate Clyde and send Congo with it at dawn, asking her to visit you here, where I can see her, for she must ship my lads for me, and she'll get me those who are good and true."

"But is your home under watch now?"

"No, my son, for it is generally believed that you are dead."

"So much the better, for I can get a bunk in your house here and can keep hidden until another black night comes so I can run out."

Supper was then served, and most heartily did Cecil enjoy it, and afterward Mrs. Conrad wrote the note and Congo was told to place it in Miss Kate Clyde's hands as soon as she was visible in the morning.

Then the helmsman in white and Congo took the yawl to the former's hiding-place, the cavern pool, and Cecil Conrad laid down to rest with as much confidence as though he was in the cabin of the brig.

At dawn Congo departed upon his errand, and Kate Clyde read the note when she came down to breakfast.

"Who brought this?" she asked, of a servant.

"That wild African nigger ape of the Conrads, miss," was the answer.

"Where is he?"

"Outside, miss."

Kate went to the door and said:

"It is such a bad day, Congo, please say to your mistress that I will come over with pleasure when it is pleasant."

"Pretty leddy no mind bad weather, but come," and in what was intended for a whisper Congo added:

"*Him come home.*"

Kate started and her face paled, while she said quickly:

"Certainly, if your mistress is so ill I will come at once."

Congo grinned with delight and took his leave, while Kate, half an hour after, astonished the natives by mounting her horse and riding off alone in the rain.

In half an hour she leaped from her saddle at the Conrad home, and entering the house found her hands in the warm grasp of the Sea Rebel.

"Welcome back, Master Cecil, and let me say that I believe you have more lives than a cat, for here I have been ruining my eyes weeping for you as dead and I never saw you look so well; but you run a terrible

risk in coming here," and she looked most anxious.

"It was to let mother know that I was not dead, and to get you to help me."

"Willingly."

"I have a brig, and how I got it mother will tell you, and you must keep the secret, but I want fifty splendid fellows, and you must ship them for me, or as many as you can."

"I can do it, for father's friend, the sea-captain I told you of, died suddenly, and so the privateer scheme fell through, and poor Ned Endicott in his despair, intending leaving to-morrow with a number of the lads to ship on some craft in the patriot service."

"I will tell Ned to day to collect his crew, fifty you say?"

"Yes, and a berth of second officer for Ned."

"Good! and he can get you the men, and that very soon."

"Let them run out in a coaster one month from to-night, rain, shine or storm, and keep in the offing, showing two green lights to starboard, and two red lights to port, with a white light at the masthead, and to head toward any craft showing the same signals."

"Remember, one month from to-night, Kate."

"I'll not forget, and the lads will be there, and a splendid lot of fellows will they be, too, for I know all the coasters, and with Ned we will pick them."

"Bless you, little woman, and I will be able to run out again to-night, as this rain will continue, and as I cruise by night, why it will be some days before I can get back to my vessel, which will not be in full trim for several weeks, for she is coming out for service afloat, Kate."

"Yes, and to win a name under you that will remove the brand of outlaw from her captain."

"By the way, Cecil, I have met Lady Lucille, and she is so lovely; but she speaks of you as the daring Sea Rebel, and said you would turn up again, so call your brig the Sea Rebel."

"The Sea Rebel she shall be, for you have named her," was the reply of the patriot sailor.

Kate did not dare remain away long, so soon took her leave, after wishing for Cecil every success, and her first duty after arriving at the Golden Anchor Inn was to dispatch a messenger for Ned Endicott.

The young sailor soon put in an appearance, and the two were engaged in deep consultation for a couple of hours, when Ned Endicott left the inn with such a bright face that winks went around the crowd of tap-room loafers who saw him, and one said knowingly:

"The landlord's darter has accepted him, maybe."

CHAPTER XIII.

A SURPRISE FOR THE ADMIRAL.

IN spite of the war-clouds, and the tales of battles on land, combats at sea and universal resistance to England's king, Admiral Lord Chauncey found time, or took it, to visit Elm Haven.

Of course consultations with General Sir George Harwood were the reasons given, but though these were indulged in, of course, between the two, the ultimate end of the admiral's visits he hoped would be the ruining of Lady Lucille Harwood.

He not only had fallen more and more dangerously in love with her, but he was getting more and more desperately in debt and needed her fortune.

He owed Lord Nevil Norcross a snug little sum of borrowed money, and he was no longer in full command of his Majesty's forces by sea and land for that coast, so that there were chances to make snug little sums going to another than himself.

He had much authority still, but it was expected by himself that he would soon get orders to take a fleet to sea, or be sent to another department, and this he wished to avoid, or if pressed to do so, to first win the heart and hand of Lady Lucille, for with her large fortune he could retire and not expose his august person to the flying cannon-balls which were no respecters of rank.

Lady Lucille always treated him well, for it was her nature to do so, but as the escape of Cecil Conrad had severed her compact

with him, she utterly ignored the fact that it had momentarily existed, while he had been only too anxious to again get the young rebel into his power, that by producing him he might win the prize.

Lady Lucille having enjoyed the pleasure of a visit from Hortense Gerty, had determined to keep her with her as long as she could, and the two enjoyed life amazingly together, riding, driving and flirting with the scores of officers that fluttered around them like moths about a candle, seeming to feel a certain enjoyment in having heart-aches for their dear sakes; but such are the bitter sweets of love it is said.

It was rumored that Lord Nevil and Major Pearley were the favored ones, and yet others held hope, and Captain Burnett was as persistent in his determination to win Lady Lucille as was the admiral.

So the admiral made another visit to Elm Haven, and in the library on the evening of his coming were assembled the same party as of yore, for the younger officers had kept back on the arrival of the stern old sailor.

Judge Hazel came out from among his books, and his wife, who had developed into housekeeper, was by his side.

Then there was the admiral in his easy-chair, Sir George near him, Lucille and Hortense, with Lord Nevil and Major Pearley hovering near.

The conversation naturally turned upon the war, and both the admiral and Sir George were forced to admit that the "rebels" were giving the king's army and navy in America all that they could do, with a prospect of being yet more successful.

It was Hortense who said in her demure way, yet behind which there was so much:

"You know they are a remarkable people, my lord—look at that young hero, Conrad, for instance."

This was like shaking a red rag at a bull, for it set the old admiral off like a fire-cracker.

"That hero as you call him, Miss Gerty, is a fugitive from justice and a rebel spy."

"A man whom I took under the shadow of my wing and did so much for, too."

"Did he not win his honors, admiral?"

"What would he have done unaided by me, Miss Gerty?"

"I really believe you are angry for losing so splendid an officer," wickedly said Hortense, encouraged by a nudge from Kate and the looks of Lord Nevil and Major Pearley.

"Well, just let me catch the runaway," said the admiral, and just at that moment he would have doubtless given up Lady Lucille for the pleasure of hanging him.

"You would not hang him after his gallant rescue of us from that terrible pirate, and saving a king's cutter and her crew also, my lord?"

"That was generous in him, I am forced to admit," and the admiral toned down.

"Well, the fellow is dead, so that is the end of him, and he died with the brand of outlaw upon him," Sir George said, as though he had pleasure in this thought.

"Dead! not a bit of it," excitedly cried the admiral.

"What! have you more news of his lawless act?" asked Sir George, anxiously, and the two ladies and Lord Nevil and Paul Pearley were all attention.

"I should think I had news of him," was the admiral's response, and he fumbled in his pockets in search of something.

"Now I supposed that he was dead also until a few weeks ago, when I received a report that somewhat surprised me— Ah! here it is!"

"It seems that this young Will-o'-the-Wisp of the sea was cruising around the coast near Portsmouth, when he heard a plot of some Spanish sailors to seize a king's craft."

"Then some sailors had come into Portsmouth, the report says, in their long-boat, stating that they had been wrecked and were all of the crew who escaped, and those who saw them seemed to regret that they had not also perished."

"There was an Englishman in the lot, who had been a passenger, he said, on the Spanish barque, and the mate had his right hand cut off at the wrist, for it had been crushed and some of them had rudely amputated it."

"The fellows were well treated and roved

at will about the harbor and strolled about the town.

"But they were up to mischief, and planned to capture the coast-guard schooner *Spur*, that has five officers and thirty men."

"The captain came up to town in his long-boat, with eight oarsmen, a middy and coxswain, and this left the schooner short of men, so that these Spaniards meant to go down at night in their long-boat, having heard the captain tell his lieutenant to cruise about during the day and return by midnight for him at a certain point."

"With those on board believing the long-boat the captain's, the seizure of the schooner would have been an easy matter."

"But, overhearing the plot, the sailor—"

"The *Sea Rebel*?" asked Hortense.

"Yes, Miss Hortense, that *Sea Rebel* swam out from the shore to the schooner, appeared on board half dressed, and made known the plot and suggested a way to capture or kill all of them."

"The officer was so pleased with the man that he begged him to remain on board and carry out his own plot."

"He did so, and did it well, for he stationed men aloft with great bags of iron balls, and those on deck were put in position to fire at the word."

"The long-boat hove in sight, and when hailed, proved to be the Spaniards, but the Englishman with the *Dagos* replied that it was 'the captain returning.'"

"Alongside they came and sprung on board the schooner, to be met by a withering fire, and a dozen cannons thrown from aloft into the boat stove holes into her and prevented all escape."

"Some jumped back into the sinking boat, others were shot, or cut down upon the deck, and the one-armed man and the Englishman were captured unharmed, and I may here say were promptly hanged upon the arrival of the captain from town an hour after the affair."

"And the *Sea Rebel*?" asked Hortense.

"There is the strange part of it, for he refused to remain on board, or to be sent ashore in a boat, and no reward would he accept."

"But he asked to write a note, and left it with the lieutenant to deliver, when, with a good-by to all, he sprung into the sea and disappeared."

"They were fearful lest he be drowned, but there was no danger of drowning that man-fish, and he swam ashore, only a quarter of a mile away, I believe."

"And the note, admiral?" asked Sir George.

"Was addressed to me, and here it is."

Unfolding a piece of a paper, the admiral continued:

"He would not tell who he was to those on the schooner; but this does, for listen to what he has written:

"ON BOARD HIS MAJESTY'S SCHOONER *SPUR*, }
"OFF PORTSMOUTH. }

"ADMIRAL LORD CHESTER CHAUNCEY:—
"MY LORD:—I beg to submit to your notice that, since, by your command, I was branded as a deserter from the Royal Navy, a rebel spy and escaped criminal, I have to my credit the saving from destruction a capture by a pirate, his Majesty's cutter *Sea Sphinx*, and coast-guard schooner *Spur*.

"With respect,
"Your obedient servant,
"CECIL CONRAD,
"The *Sea Rebel*.

"What do you think of that, Sir George?" Sir George made no reply, but Lady Lucille said dryly:

"As papa is silent, I will say that it is just like the splendid fellow."

Sir George seemed about to make some angry retort to his daughter's words, when there came the deep boom of a heavy gun, that made the windows rattle and brought all to their feet.

CHAPTER XLIII.

WHAT WAS SEEN FROM THE CLIFF.

THE night was a perfect one, the moon at its full, and the sea rippled by a six-knot breeze, steady and off the land.

The gun, which had startled all, was evidently fired from not far away, perhaps from the fort, perhaps from the brig-of-war or cutter then in the haven, for the *Sea Foe* was away on a cruise.

Then, perhaps, it had come from the battery over the haven.

At any rate, cloaks and wraps were put on, and the party hastened out to the point of observation, the rustic arbor on the cliff.

Then they saw the cause, for there lay to, off-shore a mile, an armed brig, trim and beautiful, her sails snowy white, and the moonlight glistening upon her guns, and the small arms of her crew.

"A Yankee, by all that's good!" exclaimed the admiral.

Lord Nevil and Major Pearley regarded her attentively through their glasses, and looked at each other knowingly.

"My lord, that is the buccaneer brig *Blue Wing*, I am sure," said Lord Nevil, and Lady Lucille quickly added:

"I am sure of it."

"And that gun was a challenge to a king's cruiser to come out and fight her—preposterous!"

"It is the buccaneer, my lord, but newly refitted, and with new sails, I am sure; but I am not mistaken— Hal there goes another gun, and to leeward."

"Why does not Brentford accept the fellow's challenge?" angrily said the admiral, alluding to the commander of the *Rescue*, the brig-of-war then in the haven."

At this moment a middy came running toward the group, and saluting, said:

"I am Midshipman Brice, my lord, from the *Sea Sphinx*, and Captain Brentford hailed and sent me ashore, to tell you that he was going out to fight the brig, which he believes is the buccaneer *Blue Wing*."

"Ay, ay, sir, and tell Captain Girard to hold himself in readiness to give chase, also, when the pirate takes to flight."

"Ay, ay, sir," and the middy disappeared at a run.

"There goes the *Rescue*," cried Sir George, as the white sails of the brig-of-war were seen sailing out of the haven.

It was a grand, a beautiful sight, to see the splendid vessel accepting the gauntlet to combat thrown into her face by the strange craft in the offing.

The heavy battery was manned on the cliff over the haven, and crowds of soldiers were there, and hundreds were coming from the fort on the hill and the camps to see the battle from the vantage-ground the cliffs gave.

The brig off-shore slowly swung around as she saw her foe coming out, and began to move through the waters, while her extra canvas was taken in and her fighting sails set.

Her men were at quarters, stripped to the waist, the battle-lanterns were in position, and upon her quarter-deck a group of officers were gathered, the moonlight glimmering in upon their uniforms.

"That pirate handles his craft well, and Brentford will have a desperate crew to fight; but then he has a heavier battery, and half a hundred more men, at least, than the buccaneer," the admiral said.

"The *Rescue* is certainly a much larger craft, so will soon demolish the insolent outlaw," Mrs. Hazel said.

The *Rescue* also looked very beautiful and dangerous as she sped seaward, also in fighting trim and the men at quarters.

Captain Brentford was one of the best officers in the Royal Navy, and had a brilliant record, while his crew were picked men.

As the *Rescue* gained open water, she fired a shot at the stranger and sent up her fighting flag with a cheer from her crew.

Instantly a blue light was burned on the deck of the stranger, rendering the beautiful craft visible in every outline, and up to her peak went her colors.

"The Continental flag!"

"She is a rebel cruiser!"

Such were the cries that came from the lips of all except the admiral, who uttered an oath at the audacity of the enemy daring to burn a blue light to show his colors.

At the sight a wild cheer was heard in the distance up the coast, where the villagers were also gazing upon the scene, attracted by the firing.

Angered at the flag flaunted in his face by the glare of the blue light, Captain Brentford swung round quickly and gave the enemy a broadside.

The iron went home, as could be heard, but the American did not reply, gliding quietly along as though not hit.

Again the British brig fired a broadside, and once more it told, for the foretopmast

of the American was cut away, and it could be seen that some of her crew had fallen.

Then the British craft began a rapid fire, and those on the cliff stood dazed at the American's not hitting back.

"He is demoralized by Brentford's splendid fire," shouted the admiral.

But, as he spoke the starboard bow of the American brig was illumined by a red flash, and then along the bulwarks they went, one, two, three, four, five guns.

The broadside had been fired with the calmest deliberation, and ere the echo of the last gun had died away the American had swung around as on a pivot, and her port battery opened in the same deliberate way.

The result upon the British vessel was terrible, for every shot had told, and with her bowsprit shot away she broached to.

One gun was dismounted, her bulwarks had great gashes in them, her decks were seamed and her maintopmast was cut away, while a score of forms lay upon her decks unable to rise.

"My God!" cried the admiral, and he had a fear well up into his throat that the splendid Brentford had met his match.

But Captain Brentford was not disheartened, though hard hit, and a new bowsprit was run out, the decks were cleared of the wounded and the debris and the fight went on.

Hot and fast did the Britisher fire, and slow and terrible came the shots from the American, who came nearer and nearer his enemy as though threatening to board.

Mrs. Hazel had gone to the house, sickened at the sight, and her husband had turned his head away.

Sir George, stern-faced and threatening, stood gazing at the scene, while the admiral was in a tempest at the sight.

Fascinated, both Lady Lucille and Hortense stood, with Lord Nevil and Major Pearley near, and the two officers were cast down at the seeming advantage of the American craft, and over the gallant Brentford, too.

Suddenly the admiral's voice rung out in thunder tones:

"Ho, the Sea Sphinx! why do you not go out and help Brentford finish that accursed rebel?"

Whether his voice was heard or not, it was just what Jules Girard was going to do.

He had seen from his rigging that the Rescue was the loser, and now the little cutter started for the fray.

"That is hardly fair," said Lady Lucille, indignantly.

"All is fair in war, child," Sir George angrily replied.

"And in love, it is said," Lord Nevil whispered.

"It was a challenge which Captain Brentford accepted, and he is the stronger in vessel, guns and men, so it should be fought out fairly if he is a rebel," Lady Lucille said; that Lord Norcross and Major Pearley argued with her was evident, as the former said:

"Bravo, for Brentford! he is signaling to Girard to keep off."

"Splendid old Brentford," Major Pearley added.

But the signals, if seen by the Sea Sphinx, were not heeded, and she headed toward the American, who suddenly luffed and poured a terrific broadside upon the little cutter.

It staggered her, but she held on, firing as she came, and this diversion gave Captain Brentford time to rally, and advantage was taken of it.

"The Yankee does not run," blankly said Sir George.

"By Heaven they must take him," cried the admiral.

"The man that commands that rebel craft is a hero," Lord Nevil remarked, and Hortense rewarded him with:

"I admire a man that can rise as you and Major Pearley do, above prejudice."

And the Yankee boat not only did not run, but seemed to court the unequal combat.

As the cutter was now nearest to him he turned his attention to her, and after two broadsides Jules Girard's Sea Sphinx was no longer in the combat, for her foremast was cut away, her bowsprit also, and the wreckage hung all over her decks, from which came cries and groans of agony.

As if no longer caring for the crippled

craft, the American now turned her attention to the brig-of-war, and Jules Girard cut away the wreckage, got out his sweeps, and sent his vessel creeping back toward the haven, while with two boat's crews and himself in command, he headed for the Rescue.

The latter, meanwhile, had rallied strongly, and it could be seen that but for the aid given by the Sea Sphinx the battle would have gone against her.

As though not caring to fire upon the two boats, the American paid no attention to them, and they reached the Rescue just as the two brigs were nearing each other, to board.

The cheers of the Rescue's crew at this extra aid of forty men were heard upon the cliff, and all watched the result.

"That rebel will win, my word for it," whispered Major Pearley, so that Sir George and the admiral should not hear.

"He handles a craft marvelously well; don't you think so, admiral?"

"Yes, Norcross, Brentford was always a fine fighter."

"I referred to the rebel, admiral."

A muttered oath was the answer, and then rapid firing from the American at close range, and such firing!

It even caused the admiral to wince, and Sir George to say:

"That ends it, for the Yankee wins!"

Right down upon the brig now bore the American, and a loud, clear voice was heard:

"Boarders, ahoy! Sea Rebels follow me!"

"Heaven have mercy! it is Cecil Conrad that commands your brig!" and Lady Lucille covered her face with her hands, as a distant cheer came from up toward the village.

With wild yells the Americans followed their leader upon the deck of the British brig, and the defenders were swept aft and the red ensign of England was hauled down in token of surrender.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A DYING MAN'S CONFESSION.

LORD ADMIRAL and Sir George turned away from the cliff, and, accompanied by George Hazel, went to the mansion.

The other four remained, and the hearts of the two officers were sad at the defeat of their countrymen, but they were glad of the course that their rebel friend had started upon.

"I knew they would not keep him down; but how did he get that pirate brig, I wonder?" Lord Norcross said.

"Heaven only knows; but that fellow always falls upon his feet, no matter how high you toss him."

"I guess he captured the pirate; but see, a boat is putting off from the Rescue's side," and, as Major Pearley spoke, all eyes turned again upon the two brigs.

"He is sending after the cutter that is running away," Lucille suggested.

The cutter was now almost into the entrance to the haven, and pulling with all the speed her crippled condition would allow.

"No, the battery on the haven cliff would prevent her being taken now, for the men are ready at their guns," the major said.

The boat pulled straight in toward the haven entrance, and the brig swung about and then began to spread sail and move off seaward.

"The rebel has got his prize; but what does that boat mean?" Lord Norcross asked.

"I'll find out," and Major Pearley set off for the shore to meet the boat.

When he returned the party was still on the cliff, and he said:

"Brentford is wounded, and Captain Cecil Conrad, of the American privateer Sea Rebel, allowed him to come ashore, where he could receive proper care, and more, he did not hold Jules Girard prisoner, as he said that he was not in the fight, so he permitted him to return with his men and bring poor Brentford."

"The losses on the brig and cutter were terrible, and Brentford says that Conrad is a devil in a fight and a gentleman as a victor, and that the only reason he did not conquer was because the Sea Rebel whipped him."

"And Captain Girard?" asked Lord Norcross.

"Is very quiet, but says that no other man than Conrad could have bested the two king's boats."

"And then the tall man with the flashing

helmet we saw on the Yankee, and leading the boarders, is our friend the Sea Rebel?"

"Yes, Lady Lucille; but he gave no account of himself, Girard said; but returned him his sword with no allusion to the past, though it must have been a sweet morsel of revenge to him to humble the man who sentenced him to die at the yard-arm, and for a second time."

"Girard is humbled, I can see, and now wishes he had obeyed Brentford's signal to keep out of the fight, for he lost heavily, while Brentford's loss is terrible."

"And where is brave Captain Brentford?"

"Your father sent to have him brought up to the mansion, Lady Lucille."

"I am so glad of it; but is his wound dangerous?"

"I hope not, as it is a bullet wound in the shoulder; but the loss of his vessel hurts him more, for it is his first defeat, poor fellow."

"Let us go and see if we can be of service, Hortense," and Lady Lucille, after another glance at the slowly-receding brig, led the way to the mansion.

The surgeon of the cutter was with Captain Brentford, and having extracted the bullet from his shoulder, said that he did not anticipate any danger from the wound.

It was a gloomy gathering around the supper-table that night, for the admiral and Sir George were as black as thunder-clouds at what had occurred.

Captain Brentford had told his story, and they had heard Jules Girard's report, and they had both only words of praise and kindness for the victor, and this grated horribly upon the ears of the two senior officers.

Jules Girard went to work at once to repair damages, and spars and material were sent for to Boston, while the schooner Sea Foe was expected into the haven daily, to bear the admiral back again to his post of duty.

The Sea Rebel and her prize had disappeared; but dispatches came telling that the capture of the Rescue was not her first prize, as a schooner-of-war had already fallen her prey, and several valuable British merchantmen on her way down to Elm Haven.

Several days after the combat Lady Lucille received a call from Kate Clyde.

She told Lady Lucille that she wished to see her alone, and was taken to her own room.

"Lady Lucille, I come as a messenger now, and I'll tell you that I met Captain Cecil Conrad of the American privateer Sea Rebel, last night, and he came not alone to the rendezvous he had appointed with me."

"I know, Lady Lucille, that the name of your brother Hazel is under a cloud, and your father does not allow it to be mentioned, but I wish to speak to you of him."

"He was wild, yes, and he left home suddenly, the charge against him no one knowing but myself and your father; but it was that he had one night opened your father's desk and robbed him of many thousands of pounds."

"Your brother left home that night and got into a scrape in Boston, and your father wrote him never to darken his doors again, or cross his path, or he would have him thrown into prison."

"Your brother Hazel left the country, was captured by pirates, and Cecil Conrad captured the Blue Wing, and in a single combat with Balfour, the Buccaneer, killed him and turned his brig into an American privateer."

"Thus he rescued your brother, and in the battle the other night between the brigs, one of the crew was wounded, and in dying confessed to Captain Conrad, your brother, the village priest and myself, for we went on board the Sea Rebel, I must tell you, that he had been your father's trusted valet, Bonham, whom you all supposed had been drowned, and that he had robbed the desk that night and retained these papers as proof, for they were with the money."

"Your brother, now known as Lieutenant Hazel, is second officer on board the Sea Rebel, Lady Lucille, and has a brilliant record before him, but, with proof of his innocence, no longer wishes to remain guilty in the mind of your father and yourself, and so I come to you with these facts."

"Bless you, sweet Kate, and wait here, for father will come and hear all."

Soon Sir George entered the room and greeted Kate Clyde pleasantly, for he had always admired the comely girl, and then she handed him the papers she had brought, along with the dying statement of the man Bonham, signed by the village priest, Cecil Conrad and herself, and told her story.

The baronet was deeply moved, and then expressed how glad he was to know the truth, but the fact that Hazel, his son, the heir to his estates and title had become a rebel made him very angry; but that Kate did not care for, nor did Lady Lucille, and the general hastened away to tell Admiral Chauncey the news, for the old gentleman already knew the facts of Hazel's exile from home.

And he, too, swore that he should have "turned rebel."

CHAPTER XLV.

A STORY OF THE PAST.

Two years passed away, and the name of the Sea Rebel was upon every lip, and she had won more fame as a cruiser than all of the fleet Red Rovers of the Revolution, as the privateers of King and Congress were called.

The brand against Cecil Conrad, of having been a "British spy," had been wiped out by the exertions of General Arno, who had himself pleaded for the young hero, and Americans were proud of their gallant Rebel Rover, for he had sent in many a rich prize, and it was said that even the cabin-boys on his vessel would be rich with prize money when the war should end.

Then, too, the Sea Rebel had captured prizes of armed vessels that were most useful to the Continental Government, and as Hazel Harwood was a sharer in these honors, Sir George was proud of him, though his fame was won fighting against the king.

Still Lucille would argue, that Hazel, like herself, was an American.

Lord Norcross, despairing of ever winning Lady Lucille, had transferred his affections to Hortense Gerty, and she had become Lady Norcross, while her husband had been made a general of division.

Major—I beg pardon—Colonel Paul Pearley had also won distinction, and was trying to win the heart of Lady Lucille still, flirting with Kate Clyde in the mean time, and at times convinced that he really desperately loved her.

Captain Burnett had been placed in command of a larger vessel, also a brig, leaving the Sea Rebel to Jules Girard, and he still tried to convince Lady Lucille that she should marry him.

So far he had never met the Sea Rebel on the seas, though he had heard that Conrad was looking for him, and he had made many wagers that one day he would capture the famous pirate, as he would call the American privateer.

Lord Chauncey had found means to tide over his moneyed affairs, and still had command over a part of the coast; but he had borrowed the money to pay his debts at a high rate of interest, and was still persistent in his endeavors to marry Lady Lucille and her fortune.

As was his wont, he went down to Elm Haven for a week of relaxation from his duties, and Captain Girard took him there, while Captain Burnett, in his new brig, which he had called the Tigress, was to call for him and take him back.

As General Sir George Harwood wished to visit the city he was easily persuaded to return with the admiral, Lady Lucille accompanying him.

The Tigress sailed out of Elm Haven with the admiral's pennant flying, and she did indeed look formidable; but before she had gone three leagues a sail was sighted, moving out from under the land, and a perfect chorus of voices shouted:

"The Sea Rebel!"

There was no mistaking that craft, and she was not half a league away, having been anchored inshore until she sighted the Tigress.

All was excitement on board, the drums beat and the men went to quarters, while every eye was turned upon the American, who came on with colors flying, not in the least dreading her formidable enemy.

"I am almost tempted to order Burnett to run for it, with you on board, Lady Lu-

cille," said the admiral, "for the fight will be a hot one."

"Do not fear upon my account, sir, for I shall go to the cabin when the firing begins, as it is my prerogative, I believe."

Five minutes more and the Tigress fired the first shot and at once the combat began.

Where the British crew fired rapidly, and most of their shots flew wide of the mark, the Americans fired with cool deliberation and every shot told.

The admiral was on deck, as was also Sir George, and to their horror they saw that the Tigress was getting crippled and her crew falling about them, while the Sea Rebel did not appear to be materially hurt.

Captain Burnett was in a rage, yet he could do no more against his terrible adversary.

"Blow him out of the water, my lads!" he would shout, and the lads tried to execute the order; but somehow the Sea Rebel still got the best of it.

"My God! you will have to run for it, Burnett, or we will all die in Yankee prisons," groaned the admiral, as he saw that the Sea Rebel was slowly hacking the Tigress to pieces.

"Heaven have mercy! but this is appalling, father," cried Lady Lucille, glancing up from the companionway and beholding the body-strewn deck, and the scene of havoc.

"Go below, my child!" cried Sir George; but she did not stir from her position.

"Admiral, must I fly?" cried Captain Burnett, his face white, his eyes sunken, and looking like a man who had suddenly grown old.

"For the sake of Lady Lucille, and to prevent the capture of Sir George and myself, and the brig with the large sum of king's gold you took from the sinking supply ship, yes, fly, for you can outfoot him."

"All hands ahoy to make sail!" shouted Captain Burnett, and the brig was put away in flight, just as Lady Lucille appeared on deck.

The Sea Rebel was wearing around to deliver one of her terrible broadsides, when suddenly the movement was checked, and she came around headed in pursuit, and sail was spread.

Lady Lucille was fairly dragged below by Sir George, and then the Tigress opened hotly with her stern guns.

To the amazement of all the Sea Rebel did not reply, but came steadily, swiftly on, and all saw that the boasted speed of the Tigress was being shown to be a delusion when compared with that of the privateer.

On, on she came, picking up the Tigress rapidly, taking her punishment as it came, and yet not flinching or hitting back.

"Boarders, ahoy!" was heard in Cecil Conrad's matchless voice.

"Boarders to repel boarders!" Burnett shouted.

"Boarders, follow me!" and with this Cecil Conrad was upon the deck of the Tigress, and the inevitable tide he carried with him, the old pirate crew, trained to board in a hundred hot fights, swept the British tars before them and won the battle.

Captain Burnett tendered his sword with ill-grace, but Cecil Conrad said:

"I cannot accept the sword of an old friend. Keep it, Captain Burnett, and may I not ask if there is a lady aboard, for I saw one when about to fire a broadside, and did not do so, but carried your ship by boarding."

"Young man, I give it up after those gallant words, and can no longer hold feeling against you; you are a marvel, a sailor and a gentleman," cried the admiral, coming forward.

Cecil Conrad smiled and accepted the proffered hand, for his revenge was complete, and then he said:

"As I see Sir George Harwood on board, it must have been, as I supposed, his daughter whom I saw, and on her account I shall not take the brig as a prize, but allow her to go on her way."

Captain Burnett's face flushed with pleasure, and, in a choking voice, he said:

"Forgive me the past, Conrad, and accept my gratitude for this noble act."

"Did you hear, Sir George, what Captain Conrad said?"

"Yes, sir; but do not see why Mister Conrad should show clemency to a king's ship

through my family," was the cold response of Sir George.

"If General George Harwood will allow me a few minutes' conversation in the cabin of my vessel, I would esteem it a favor," said Conrad.

"What can you wish with me, sir?"

"I shall explain when you come into my cabin, sir."

Sir George muttered an oath and followed the Sea Rebel to his vessel, while the two crews were busy looking after the wounded and repairing damages.

"I have, Sir George, the pleasure of introducing to you your son, a most gallant officer."

The meeting between the father and son was an affecting one, and then Hazel Harwood said:

"Father, let me tell the story of Cecil Conrad."

"His father did not die years ago, as all believed, but only a few months since, and his name was not Carl Conrad, but Sir George Harwood, you being his half brother. Carl Conrad, who went with him to India, and, believing him dead, returned years after and pretended to be George Harwood, a deceit your step-father, Lord Harwood, aided you in, for somehow he loved you more than his own son."

"You got this appointment to America, and married the mother of Lucille and myself, and the real George Harwood had, strange to say, already come here and married the mother of this gentleman, my cousin."

"He saw you, and so decided to hide from you, for reasons he would never give, but which you must know."

"He was wrecked, and nearly lost his life, his hair turned white with his sufferings, and his mind was slightly impaired, so that he kept in hiding, fearing some peril, and, being seen, soon became known as Carl Conrad's ghost."

"He forced Cecil here to promise not to call him father, and so lived apart, a wretched, unhappy life until death came to his relief."

"But, father, his papers, his jewels and his confession prove that he was the real Sir George, and yet, though his son here is the rightful heir to his wealth and title, he refuses to accept both, and more, says that no one shall know your secret, and that you shall still continue as Sir George Harwood, but with you the title will die, for I am an American, father, and will claim no rank I know is not justly my own."

"Such, father, is Cecil Conrad's story, and I now know that you have recognized him as the real heir all along by your treatment of him."

"But that is forgotten and forgiven, Uncle George, and matters shall remain as they have been, and your secret is buried from all others."

"Now we will go on deck, and pray drive that cloud from your brow."

"Forgive me, Cecil, my noble boy, for I did wrong your father cruelly, and you, too," and the strong man broke down and sobbed like a child.

CONCLUSION.

THE Tigress went on her way rejoicing, after a delay of an hour or two, and the Sea Rebel sped away to continue her victories as a Red Rover of the Revolution.

At last, however, the long and cruel war ended and the Colonists became a nation, and peace settled upon land and sea.

Then Cecil Conrad, a man who had won a great name as the Sea Rebel, came back to his home by the sea and built for his mother and himself a grand home.

And to that home, some months after, he took Lady Lucille as his bride, and Colonel Paul Pearley, who had resigned from the British Army and made America his adopted country, was his "best man."

The colonel had a motive, too, in resigning that had love as a foundation, for he married pretty Kate Clyde the daughter of the rich landlord of the Golden Anchor Inn.

The admiral went back to England and never married, and after the death of "Sir George," Hazel Harwood inherited Elm Haven, but he would never claim his title, well knowing that it rightfully belonged to Cecil Conrad, the Sea Rebel.

THE END.

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